

15th May 2020

Dear students; parents / carers and staff,

I hope that all our families and students are keeping well and staying safe?

We have now written to all students this week to let them know that we are thinking about them all every day. It is hard being at school without our great students ... it is far too quiet!

This was especially important to do following the Government update on Sunday 10 May and the announcement of the proposed lockdown 'exit' strategy and with the 'road map' for this process looking longer than most would want, we felt that it was important for all year groups to know and understand the high level of support that we will be putting in place so their learning can continue over the next seven weeks.

It felt very emotional writing to the different year groups as the contact with our young people will be very limited now for the remainder of the year. For Key Stage 3 students in years 7 to 9, they will now not be returning to school this academic year as 'normal' and although this makes me feel very sad for them, we need to respect and support the decisions of the Government and accept their guidance so that we can keep everyone safe. Now that it is clear that a return is not possible, we have looked to adapt their work for Term 6, so that there is variety in the tasks set and the workload is more appropriate. The details of this change to their work was shared in the letter to the students.

For Years 10 and 12, it was important to write to them following a lot of speculation in the press about a return to school in June. To make this clear, the Department for Education (DFE) guidance states:

- *From the week commencing 1 June, we are asking:*

Secondary schools, sixth form, and further education colleges to begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils, although we do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage.

As soon as we received this advice, the leadership team have been in school planning for how we can support learners in Year 10 and 12 to return to school in a sensible and safe way, so that they and staff are protected. As part of this planning we have been working very closely with the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust so that all learners have access to similar timetables and programmes.

The process for allowing students and staff back on to the school site is complex, as you can imagine and we are looking to finalise all plans and bring back Year 10 and 12 on a weekly rota basis from 15 June, starting with Year 12. This will obviously be subject to Government advice staying the same over the next few weeks.

We would like all parents / carers to be completely reassured that we have spent a vast amount of time looking at all aspects of students returning to the school, we have a comprehensive risk assessment and robust systems in place that I feel will enable us to encourage learners to return in a positive and safe way. When all the details have been completely finalised, letters will be sent out to all Year 10 and 12, including an individual timetable for the days they will be required in school and the procedures that need to be followed.

We are very happy with our plans and feel that it is extremely important for these two cohorts of students to have face to face access to the teaching staff prior to the summer break, so that their learning can be reviewed and further supported.

Once the details for the Year 10 and 12 return to school plans are released, or if there are any questions in the meantime, please email the school using the email address gilesparents@gilesacademy.co.uk.

As you know the teachers at Giles Academy have been working hard on setting the tasks for our students and we have received numerous emails of thanks, all of which have been passed on to the team. The DFE sent details into school this week of the National Teacher Day – Wednesday 20 May, which we thought would be fun to share and for you to use as you wish next week, as follows:

- *[Preparations for national thank a teacher day – Wednesday 20 May](#)*

[On Wednesday 20 May, we are celebrating teachers, senior leaders, support staff and all those working in education settings who are making a difference to their schools and communities during the coronavirus outbreak.](#)

[The Department for Education is working in partnership with the Teaching Awards Trust which has produced a set of resources including a Thank a Teacher toolkit containing graphics, images and frames for social media that you're free to use.](#)

[The Thank a Teacher Toolkit is available here:](#)

- *<https://thankateacher.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Thank-a-Teacher-Day-2020-Tool-Kit.pdf>*

The leadership team and staff at Giles Academy are working extremely hard to make sure that everything is well planned and well-coordinated during this period of time away from school. All are missing the students in school and this week I have a message to include for the students from Mrs Pell – Assistant Headteacher:

[Dear students,](#)

[Since school closure on 20 March, and national lockdown on 23 March, all of our staff have been working hard to support you so you can continue with your studies. Adapting to a new way of working can be difficult and I know that we all have had to adjust to what has been called the 'new normal'. To support you, many voluntary activities have been set on Show My Homework, where we have been strongly encouraging you to learn new skills. In particular, Year 7 students have been set fun 'lockdown' activities to help boost their spirits and develop some life skills in the process. Participation in the Year 7 weekly quiz has been outstanding!](#)

[We do understand that home schooling can be challenging for your parents/carers - supporting children's learning as well as trying to juggle their own work commitments and continuing to run the house as normal - as always, we appreciate the support of your parents/carers and their commitment to your learning. We are pleased some of you have taken on these extra challenges and have used this time to support your parents/carers with daily chores such as ironing, gardening and putting the washing on the line. We also have some aspiring bakers at Giles Academy and lots of you took the opportunity to celebrate VE Day by baking lots of scones, cakes and savoury treats!](#)

As a school we have always been mindful of the mental wellbeing of both our students and staff, and fully understand the importance of having balance in our daily lives. The recent good weather has encouraged many of us to become more active by getting outdoors, whether it be for a walk, run, cycle or taking up any form of exercise to help keep our bodies and minds active. We have two students who have chosen to exercise in order to help raise funds for charities. Ethan Steele in Year 11 recently completed a rowing challenge, covering more than 40,000 metres in over 7 hours to raise funds for the Princess Diana Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Grimsby. Felicity Limb in Year 8 completed a 24 hour Danceathon in order to raise money for the NHS. I know we are all very proud of their efforts, and the donations they have raised and would like to pass on our congratulations for their fantastic achievements.

We have been celebrating all of our home and school achievements on our website. I would encourage you to take the time to browse these inspirational stories, there are many examples of completed school-work, lockdown challenges, additional ways of engaging in learning as well as photos of our fantastic students enjoying rising to the challenges we have set you. In addition to this, many of you have been taking part in the SLATrust ART Competition - there is still time to enter, and as you can see from the website, we have some very talented artists in our school.

Like many, I have found adjusting to the new way of working challenging and I do miss having regular face to face contact with you, colleagues, friends and family. As you may be aware, the staff at Giles Academy have taken time to contact students to ensure they are well and able to access our learning platform. It has been lovely talking to parents/carers and hearing of how you all have been adjusting, and then being able to talk to students and discuss life in lockdown. Our current circumstances has, in my mind, confirmed that we are all here together to support each other, and together we will thrive. Like the adverts tell us, it really is 'good to talk' and I would always encourage you to stay in contact with school using our trusted methods - I know we are more than happy to give you a call to reassure you all that we are moving forward in a positive direction.

I would like to continue celebrating your home schooling successes and would invite you to email me directly, so that I can share with our school community and on our website.

Kindest regards and thanks as always

*Mrs Sam Pell
Assistant Headteacher*

Finally, thank you for your ongoing support of the school, our staff and our young people at this challenging time. Please stay safe and we look forward to being able to update you as things develop and the school can start to reopen, starting with Year 10 and 12 in the coming weeks.

Kindest regards,



Miss Katie Belcher
Deputy Headteacher