

26 JUNE 2020

Dear Parents / Carers, Staff and Students,

As ever I hope you are staying safe and well this week?

The vast majority of this week has been spent on making sure Week 1 of school return works successfully. We are pleased to share that the Year 10 were impressive and we are extremely proud of their attitudes to learning and their maturity whilst on school site – it has been truly great to see them all!

We have seen around 50-60% student attendance this week, which again meant that we had access to a number of students on school site. Focus has been on 'learning gap analysis'; reviewing work and preparing and setting work tasks for the summer in preparation for a September start. This time has been very appreciated by staff and students.

While all this has been going on our amazing students at home have been working hard on completing work on-line and maintaining effective communication with school.

We would like to again say thank you and well done to all our students!

Approximately 200 tasks have been set on Show My Homework this week. Something that we have not shared with parents / carers so far, which would be beneficial to do, is how the school is monitoring the work being set for students. This continues to be monitored daily ... and has been from day one of lockdown. Every single day the leadership team receive a very comprehensive breakdown of what work has been set in each department, a review of the quality of tasks and how we can improve things for the following day / week. This is also shared with all staff and the process has been a very considerable undertaking which has been led by Dr Kyri Chrysostomou, Assistant Headteacher. Any issues that arise are followed up with staff and with parents / carers and students. There are detailed daily checks in place to review the quality of work and to make sure work is varied enough and that it is evenly balanced. We are pleased to share that we have received some very positive feedback on work being set and this is because it has been very carefully planned and mapped. As we move into September, if any aspect of remote learning is to continue, we will move to balancing learning with a series of online virtual lessons for students too.

We continue to regularly receive lovely messages from students, which is always a joy and this includes email messages; music clips and photos ... please keep these coming in!

This week, in what would have marked the final week of exams, it has felt strange not to be able to mark and celebrate the end of examination period with the students. However, we can share and completely reassure the Year 11 and 13 student cohorts that all exams entries were successfully signed off this week for all exam boards and all qualifications. The Heads of Department and teaching staff have taken a truly professional approach in undertaking this task, for which we thank them all.

Finally, as the leadership team watch the daily Government briefings with great interest and await any announcement and details for schools being able to return, we will keep you fully updated. Recent guidance has shared that that we are able to bring back a few more learners for catch up and face to face guidance meetings within our 25% cohort number of 60 and in line with guidance on supporting vulnerable and Key Worker children:

- *DfE 15 June: We know that secondary schools are keen to invite pupils in other year groups in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial. As long as this happens in line with this and wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of pupils permitted on-site at any one time.*

This is something that we are indeed keen to do and therefore, some learners in Key Stage 3 may have been invited in for meetings or to do some additional catch up where we feel there is evidence that students are at risk of falling behind or need additional support. We feel this is important to raise, as we have received a few questions about our strategy for bringing additional students on to the school site and we can reassure all parents / carers that we are well planned for this. It is unfortunate that we are only able to cater for a very small number of additional Key Stage 3 students, and students concerned will be contacted to come into school. There is a need to keep numbers low, as we need to work within the Government guidance that sets our limit at 25%, i.e. 60.

At Giles Academy we are all very much looking forward to the day we can have more students back at school and in the meantime we will work hard to keep in touch with all our families, who have all been so very supportive, kind and understanding ... thank you all!

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Belcher', written in a cursive style.

Katie Belcher
Deputy Headteacher