

Covid-19 - Parent Update - 26/3/20

Dear Parents,

Good morning to you all and I hope you are well.

I thought I should send an update since it has been a few days since I last wrote to you all. Since then, however, I know that many of you will have been in contact with the School in various ways, perhaps via your child's form tutor, and I sincerely hope that you will have received any help that you have required. Don't forget that if you need to contact the school during this period, we have created a dedicated support address: help@gadshillschool.org

My teaching colleagues have been thrilled to receive a steady stream of work submissions from their pupils and I wanted to take this opportunity to try to reassure you all regarding our expectations for this.

I've seen a number of schools take different approaches to Distance Learning – some setting daily deadlines for work submission, some even expecting work to be sent in each day for 11am, 1pm and 3pm deadlines! Other schools are asking their pupils to adhere strictly to a usual day's timetable, albeit from home.

It strikes me that those approaches seem rather unsustainable and are completely at odds with the fact that for so many families – including those of the teachers setting the work – life will be very chaotic right now, every child will have different care arrangements and differing levels of access to technology to complete or submit tasks. I know that many of you will right now be trying to plan how you can possibly work from home while ensuring that children can be learning. Moreover, some families may also be dealing with virus symptoms or relatives at significant risk, and school work may be far from their minds.

I genuinely worry for the mental well-being of parents who may feel the expectation to try to do everything and be everything at once, and for the well-being of children for whom the reality may slowly be dawning that this year is going to be very different from anything else they have ever known before.

The path that I am most keen for us to progress down is one in which we continue to provide as much quality work as possible *for everyone*, and to assess and provide feedback on (in a reasonable time frame) the work *of those who want and are well-placed to do it*. Meanwhile, we will try to stay in touch with *all* children and can offer whatever support we are able to offer if they are struggling. (If you don't feel that your child has enough to be doing, please email help@gadshillschool.org.)

In short, and has been said before, Gad's Hill School very much remains open. We are here for you, and my incredibly dedicated colleagues will do all they can to ensure that every child can have plenty to do and can still receive quality advice

and support. However, I really want to emphasise that we are more than happy for you to exercise your own discretion in how much work you make your children do, at a time when every family will be experiencing brand new and diverse challenges.

We have been blessed, at least, with some beautiful weather this week, and if for now the time you spend with your children is dedicated to getting into your gardens together and making the most of some sunshine, rather than battling through trigonometry or fronted adverbials, please feel reassured that we will entirely support that.

Fortuitously, tomorrow is the end of term. I will write to our pupils again to mark the occasion, and I will recognise some of them who have produced some really special work this week. During the holidays, the 'Help' email address will still be monitored and you can speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead as always, but there will be no expectation on pupils to complete any work (unless they want to), nor on my teaching colleagues to mark it (again, unless they want to!). I will also, of course, be continuing to monitor national and local developments and will keep you updated with our plans for the start of the next term, due to commence on Tuesday 21st April.

All my best wishes to all of you.

Kind regards,
Paul Savage



SENT ON BEHALF OF GAD'S HILL SCHOOL, HIGHAM, KENT. ME3 7PA
T: 01474 822366 | F: 01474 822977 | OFFICE@GADSHILLSCHOOL.ORG | WWW.GADSHILLSCHOOL.ORG

Gad's Hill School

This is an automated e-mail sent on behalf of Gad's Hill School by Mr Paul Savage [p.savage@gadshillschool.org].

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