

Gad's Hill School - Covid-19 Update - 30/3/20

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your families are well. Now that we have commenced the Easter holidays, I thought it would be a good opportunity to update you on a few different topics.

Safeguarding

In recent updates, I have shared the school's safeguarding policy and other guidance for staying safe online. While we aim to reduce the number of staff on the school site to a minimum for the purposes of social distancing, we have made it easier for a Designated Safeguarding Lead to be contacted at all times. The help@gadshillschool.org email address is monitored by DSLs and we have changed the school's out-of-hours phone system so that you can be connected directly to a DSL. Please remember that in a situation where there is risk of imminent harm to a child, you should call 999.

GCSE / Upper Fifth

As parents of pupils in Upper Fifth will now be acutely aware, GCSE examinations in all subjects have been cancelled this summer. This means that the exam regulator, Ofqual, and exam boards are developing alternative plans to provide grades to affected students.

These plans are still a work in progress, although we expect to hear firmer details before Easter. What we do know is that teachers will be asked to submit their judgement regarding grades, taking into account a range of evidence and data, including mock examination and non-exam assessment. Exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student.

The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July.

In the meantime, I can entirely appreciate why a number of our Upper Fifth pupils may be feeling rather disillusioned, having put in so much hard work to prepare for examinations they will now not be taking. It is understandable that some have been finding it hard to feel motivated to complete work that has been set for them in the last week by their teachers at Gad's Hill, and also I can understand why many feel like their academic year is now over.

There are, however, reasons why I would urge our Upper Fifth not to turn their back on the support provided by our teachers through the Summer Term. The first is that the Government have announced that pupils who are dissatisfied with a calculated grade will have the opportunity to 'retake' exams in the subject early in the next academic year. Continued collaboration with our GCSE teachers in the coming months will be so important for success if that is the pathway a student chooses to go.

Even if they do not choose to take exams in the autumn, my second concern is that we are still five months away from the start of the new academic year. Transition into further education could prove difficult if study skills are not maintained during that time. In fact, the lack of exams this summer could prove to be a rare opportunity for Year 11s to bridge the gap into A-level, which has traditionally been a very steep learning curve nationwide. If your child intends to take one of our subjects on at sixth form next year, now would be a great opportunity for them to speak to our teachers about more challenging material to work towards AS-level standard.

Finally, since several Upper Fifths have asked me about this – they will still have the opportunity to sign the roof of the old house as is tradition, and I very much look forward to celebrating all their achievements at Gad’s Hill over several years within the community.

Trips

Gad’s Hill has always been a very busy school for educational trips, and I am well aware that many of you have paid deposits or full amounts towards residential experiences for your children, including journeys to New York and Madrid.

In all cases where trips have already had to be cancelled, our bursary colleagues are in regular conversation with both the travel companies and our insurers. The travel companies, in some cases, are in turn taking instruction from regulators. Recovering funds paid to companies both by parents and by the school is a priority for us, although given the vast scale of the disruption to those industries, I advise patience while processes for this are put in place. I can assure you that the delay is not at our end, and you will be advised as soon as we have further information to share.

Distinctions

My teaching colleagues were thrilled, during the last week of the Spring Term, to receive so many quality pieces of work from pupils at home. I have been equally delighted to receive many messages of thanks from parents in recognition of teachers’ efforts to set work, to respond to it and to offer pastoral support where necessary. In circumstances which are clearly far from ideal, the levels of collaboration on display from across our community are inspiring.

Colleagues have picked out examples of outstanding effort from across the school and have asked me to award distinctions (albeit ‘virtual’ ones). As ever, we could have issued far more than these, but I look forward to congratulating new recipients from the start of the Summer Term. I also award a very well deserved distinction to every parent who has managed to support all this fantastic work at home.

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| <p>KR
Isla – a fabulous Easter bonnet</p> <p>K1
Vivienne - a fabulous Easter bonnet
Beaux – fantastic effort with her spellings this week
Armaan – working hard at home
Jada – making a beautiful Easter card and writing an excellent message about HOPE
Oscar – making a great bug hotel with Evie
Jamie – a fabulous Easter bonnet
Avni – a fabulous Easter bonnet</p> <p>K2
Jack – a fabulous Easter bonnet AND an amazing rainbow AND great work in all Distance Learning
Isobel – a fabulous Easter bonnet
Poppy – a fabulous Easter bonnet
Amaya – a fabulous Easter bonnet</p> |
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J3

Louis – excellent barometer for our Weather project **AND** reaching your silver merit badge!

Nicole – brilliant barometer and weather vane

Emilie – beautiful artwork and organised approach to Distance Learning

Isaac – a very interesting quiz about light

Vernese – a super musical piece **AND** effort in English and Maths tasks

Lily – outstanding Distance Learning – even including her cat Monty!

Ayomikun – super comprehension and inference skills

J4

Bethany – A very interesting classification key about rabbits

Naomi - Very informative homework about invertebrates and vertebrates

Ewan - Very informative homework about invertebrates and vertebrates

Noah - Very informative homework about invertebrates and vertebrates

Ed – Excellent effort including his maths challenges, story plan and shop

Erin – Excellent community spirit with her rainbow picture appeal

J5

Holly – super grammar and punctuation work **AND** detailed Science observations

Lauren – great effort with all English work **AND** detailed Science observations

Autumn – imaginative story writing

Stevie – great effort with all English work **AND** excellent daily effort in Maths

Charlie – great effort with all English work **AND** excellent Maths work on decimals **AND** detailed Science observations

Rory – great effort with your 'STOWAWAY' newspaper report

Finley – Excellent Maths work on decimals **AND** detailed Science observations

Ben – Excellent Maths work on decimals **AND** detailed Science observations

Sienna - Detailed Science observations

Shivam – Working above and beyond in Maths

Remove

Jack – great effort and progress in Maths **AND** fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

Ben – 97% in his Maths spring assessment **AND** fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

Chloe – fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

Naomi - fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

George - fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

Daisy - fantastic explanation about Healthy Mind

Shell

Ade – great effort and progress in Maths

Ola – great effort and progress in Maths **AND** excellent English work

Sophie – great effort and progress in Maths

Konstantin – great effort and progress in Maths

Lexi – excellent work in English

Kabir – excellent work in English

Emma - great Maths achievement

Amy – great Maths achievement

Maddie – great Maths achievement

Charlie – great Maths achievement

Erin – great Maths achievement

Toby – excellent English work

Jess – excellent English work

Lanah – excellent English work

Lower 4

Maddi – great Maths effort and achievement, especially in showing her working out

Thomas – great Maths achievement (100% on Hegarty!)

Emma - great Maths effort and achievement, especially in showing her working out

Rahul - great Maths effort and achievement, especially in showing his working out

Upper 4

Cathal – brilliant film on gothic horror

Elena - excellent English work

Upper 5

George – excellent effort on English Distance Learning

As we are now in the Easter holidays, colleagues will be taking a short break from setting, marking and returning work, but please do feel free to continue to submit outstanding tasks during the break for return once the Summer Term has commenced, should you wish.

We made good progress during the last week of term on developing the roll out of Microsoft Teams, to help increase opportunities for collaboration and interaction within classes. Early in the Summer Term you will get guidance on how to access these Teams for your children.

Primary Sources

These are unprecedented times within living memory. If you are looking for a creative and educational activity during the next three weeks, that may also help your child to make sense of their experience, I am inviting pupils to involve themselves in a Primary Sources project.

Primary sources, in history, are immediate, first-hand accounts of an event from people with a direct connection to the event. Examples of primary sources can include diaries, poems, letters, interviews and artwork.

Children may be interested in attempting to create a record for the future of what it is like to be a child at a time of global historical significance. If so, I encourage them to create their own primary source record of their daily experiences. There is no need to share these with the school and they could be kept and preserved to look back at in later life (although I would always be very interested to see their creations, if they wish). Any primary sources that are shared with the school could become essential parts of the school's own history.

I wish you all good health. Please don't forget to contact help@gadshillschool.org if you have any questions – this address will continue to be monitored throughout the holiday.

Kind regards
Paul Savage