

7 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

ACADEMY UPDATE 12

Well what a turnaround few days this has been for everyone. Our hearts are very much feeling for our students as yet again they are having to embrace radically different ways of working and learning. They have been amazing and very mature in how they have reacted to this latest extended lockdown. Our thoughts are also with you our parents and carers, as we do understand the difficulties caused by remote learning and enabling your child to continue to thrive and learn in these challenging circumstances. We have to keep going and remain positive because our children are precious and this is their time.

We keep hearing about how schools are 'closed' but this is far from the case. Schools are open for priority and key worker children. **Schools are also fully open to every child for remote on-line learning and pastoral care.** We are fully functioning but merely having to work differently. We care about our community and we care about each one of our precious children. School hasn't stopped but is just radically different. If your child is really struggling with mental health or not accessing learning remotely do contact your child's tutor as we are developing our range of existing strategies and will find a way to offer extra support. There are some ideas for valuable support resources later in this update if required and also extensive links via the website. Equally, if you are adversely affected financially and would welcome food parcels please contact Trudy Hillman and we can arrange help: Trudy.hillman@bexhillacademy.org

In these new challenging times, and the return to home learning for many families, it is important that as a parent/carer you take time for your own wellbeing. Take some time this year to join the **Hastings and Rother Parenting Team** and other local parents in fun and interesting online sessions. As parents/carers you may be working from home, or not working at all but there are positive ways to deal with stress and big changes. The team are available to support you with our variety of online courses each with specific tips on how you can deal with the most common behaviour problems. And best of all, these evidence-based methods have already been successful in supporting families worldwide through times of crisis. So, you don't have to do it alone; we'll get through this together. Parents/carers can access as much or as little as they like, and just small changes will make a big difference! The Parenting Team use Microsoft Teams which is free to download and accessible from phones, tablets and laptops! Just simply choose the support you would like to access, email in which course you would like to attend at info@openforparents.org.uk and the link to join will be sent to you.

Details on all courses and sessions are available in the Hastings and Rother Parenting Team booklet available on the academy website under Parent/Carer Support. Alternatively, please contact the safeguarding Team at safeguarding@bexhillacademy.org and we will email a booklet to you directly.

I would like to reassure you that as a school family, we are totally committed to doing everything we can to make this lockdown as positive as can be with the different personal challenges we each face. There is currently a **debate nationally about the style of benefits of different kinds of remote learning** set by each school. I attach a link to an article recently by the Times Educational Supplement that discusses the merits of live versus recorded lessons: <https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-schools-online-learning-are-live-lessons-really-better-recorded-ones> and as you can see no one style is best. There is no easy straightforward answer to this nor is there a clear conclusion if any one of these is superior.

Here at Bexhill, we are invested in high quality recorded lessons made by the teachers in advance and from next week the majority of these for all students will have loom with voice explanation and instruction by the teacher. We also expect teachers to respond to your child's questions and provide further explanation if they find the work difficult. This does create an additional workload for teachers and I appreciate the feedback received from parents who have recognised this and praised staff for going beyond in enabling children to learn and progress.

From direct discussion with some parents this week, I know that there are mixed views about the style of remote learning in schools nationally. We will continue to review the impact of our own remote learning package and adapt for targeted children if necessary to get their best work and progress. I embrace and welcome all feedback and assure you that even more than ever we are in close partnership with you to do the absolute best for our children in these times. With this in mind, I am collecting offers from parents to take part in our **Parents Remote Learning Consultation Group**. If you wish to be involved in this consultation group, do express your interest through an email to my PA Jennie Phillips: jennie.phillips@bexhillacademy.org and we will contact you for extended discussion as we continue to develop and shape our practice. You will, in addition, all be sent information about an online Survey Monkey questionnaire so that we can separately gather the views of a wider range of parents or carers. We want to hear your 'voice' and are listening. This link was sent to you all earlier today but here it is again and we encourage you all to have your say on your child's remote education: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenc3hZSD2KgTQtUzcmFtUtz_nDsftSC7XodnMRtLHp3USuw/viewform?usp=sf_link

During the latest National Lockdown students will be expected to continue with their education through remote learning from home. We have identified that parents and carers would value an information guide for the process of how their child is learning, how they log on, the quality of work expected, how we are monitoring and providing timely feedback and also how you as a parent can monitor and get involved. **This more detailed information guide is being completed and will be sent to you next week.**

The basic process of home learning here at Bexhill Academy is that:

- Students will be set work for each of their timetabled lessons and will be expected to submit their completed work online when it is finished for teachers to check and review.
- Members of staff will monitor whether students are completing the work that is set. Students that complete remote learning tasks to a standard that exceeds or excels above the expected level will be rewarded with positive behaviour points that can be accumulated and used in our academy reward store.
- Students that do not 'turn in' a piece of work will have this logged by their classroom teacher on Class Charts and will receive a negative behaviour point.
- As a parent you will be able to track whether students are completing all of their remote learning by using your parent, Class Charts log in and viewing your son/daughter's behaviour log.
- Please use the behaviour log to regularly check whether your son/daughter has any incidents of 'Missed Remote Learning' and encourage them to complete work consistently and to the best possible standard.
- Students that consistently do not complete the work that is being set may be required to attend the Academy in person to complete future work, to ensure the continuation of their education.

The government has **changed the category of what constitutes a 'vulnerable' student and those children who regularly fail to engage in remote learning will be expected to attend school as they are now deemed a 'vulnerable' priority student.**

We have rescheduled the **Parents' Evening dates** and will send you information separately about how we will run these remotely for all Years and how you can book an appointment with your child's tutor. However, we are also contacting parents regularly if we have the need during this unusual period. I remind you **to use the Class Charts system to get daily information on your child's progress and engagement with home learning** – this will be fully up and running for all Year groups from Monday. Do contact your child's tutor if you have problems accessing this excellent resource.

Following the announcement this week that Y11 will not sit formal GCSE or BTEC examinations but will be awarding grades based on teacher assessment it is vital that every student engages and attends their online learning. Grades will be based on the work students do so remote learning and engagement is increasingly vital as an evidence base for each student's standard on which to award a grade. Here are some basic points about remote learning but they apply to every student:

- This is a chance to show and develop skills for life and the workplace: resilience, independence, commitment to high personal standards
- We expect students to complete all work to the best of their ability – if it takes only an hour or two be suspicious because it may suggest they are not learning in detail but doing work superficially
- If students don't understand, after reading the instructions again, they can ask their teacher for help
- It is important to find a quiet sensible workspace and have the right equipment to hand so that they are prepared
- Keep to the timetable of lessons as this will ensure good discipline and help students to keep up with the scheduled programme of learning
- Remember to keep to good habits: regular bedtime and sleep patterns; healthy diet and exercise

Finally, I want to finish this update by sharing the numerous commendations I have received for our Bexhill Academy staff team. They are in every day, doing extra, changing how they work, giving their all for your children. Thank you to the many parents who have acknowledged this. When other schools have had serious issues with staff attendance our staff team have shown exceptional courage when facing the risks of Covid when providing face to face teaching or additional duties in supporting or admin roles. They haven't in any way stood back but have continued to step forward and embraced radically new ways of working. I am extremely proud to stand as the Principal of this special team.

Please do keep positive and do not hesitate to contact us if you have the need. We will get through this together and all staff here are committed to walking the journey in close partnership with you. We are all human and doing the very best we can when there is no precedent or guidebook.

Stay safe and let's all have a happy and joyful new year.

Catherine Davies

Executive Principal
MA, MBA, BA (Hons), NPQH

Covid Test Update

All staff and most students now have regular- twice weekly Covid tests in school to screen for the virus. This has created addition reassurance for both staff and students as the lateral flow testing works. We isolated one member of staff on day 1 who tested positive using the in-school lateral flow tests and this positive result was followed up with a later positive on an NHS test. The lateral flow tests take 15-30 mins to get a result and have been valued by staff and students. We will continue to undertake these tests and have used staff volunteers to administer them. We did not want to employ external volunteers of supply staff but felt it best to have known staff who have existing relationships with our children. All priority and vulnerable students have the opportunity to have these tests as long as we have both parent and the student's permission.

Safeguarding Update

Happy New Year from the Bexhill Academy Safeguarding Team.

In these new challenging times, and the return to home learning for many families, it is important that as a parent/carer you take time for your own wellbeing. Take some time this year to join the Hastings and Rother Parenting Team and other local parents in fun and interesting online sessions. As parents/carers you may be

working from home, or not working at all but there are positive ways to deal with stress and big changes. The team are available to support you with our variety of online courses each with specific tips on how you can deal with the most common behaviour problems. And best of all, these evidence-based methods have already been successful in supporting families worldwide through times of crisis. So, you don't have to do it alone; we'll get through this together. Parents/carers can access as much or as little as they like, and just small changes will make a big difference!

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Careers Update:

Years 10 & 11 – The Plumpton College Information Event will take place virtually from 18-23 January 2021. This offers students a great opportunity to find out more about:

Plumpton's incredible selection of course opportunities, learn more about the fantastic facilities, speak to specific departments to get all of their questions answered, find out career opportunities, learn all about what Plumpton College has to offer.

Students can book a bespoke meeting with the course tutors online, Monday through to Saturday. Appointments are available on 23 Saturday 2021 with the careers department and support teams - finance e.g. bursarys, student loans, 14-16 options, travel, student accommodation, additional learning support
To book please use this [link](#).

Any other queries or questions regarding careers, please do email me at careers@bexhillacademy.org
Tracey J Holden, Careers Adviser

Huge congratulations to the following students who were the winners of the end of term learning challenges! They showed exceptional engagement and accuracy in responding to their learning tasks and showed outstanding engagement and resilience.

Quiz Results

Year 7

1st Place – Riley D

2nd Place – Max P

3rd Place – Umar L

Year 8

1st Place - Cass C

2nd Place – Abbie R

3rd Place – Gracie H

Year 9

1st Place - Logan S

2nd Place – Oula K

3rd Place – Emily K

Year 10

1st Place - Joshua R

2nd Place - Anisa L

3rd Place - Jackson P

Year 11

1st Place – Ben G

2nd Place – Kagan P

3rd Place – Wei L

Next week I look forward to being able to commend a wider range of students for exceptional commitment and engagement with their remote learning.

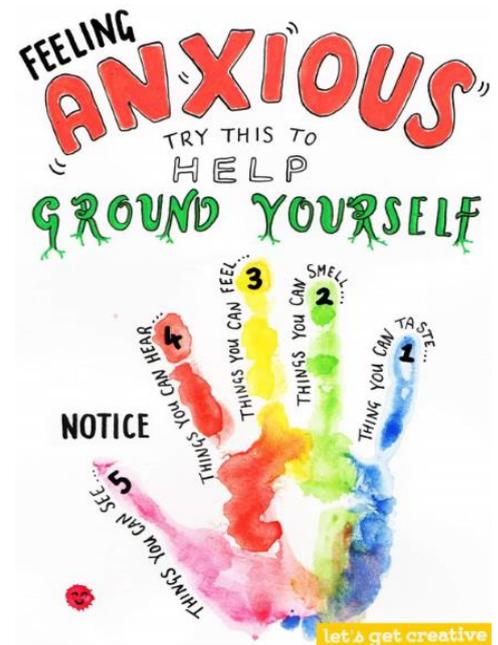
MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

As we enter into the third period of National Lock Down, looking after your own mental health and supporting those around you has never been more important. Many of us are juggling working from home as well as supporting your child/children with home learning, or working and having your child go to school, or work at home alone.

This time can be isolating and stressful on a multitude of levels. It is important to recognise in ourselves when we need to “take a breath” or “lower our temperature”.

Some simple tips to do this are:

Below are also some useful free apps on mindfulness that are easy to download:





Mind-Journal



Headspace



Motivational Quo...



Reflectly



Own It



Calm

Mindfulness

How mindfulness helps mental wellbeing

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

For further information, please visit the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

If you have any concerns regarding the mental health of your child or would like support yourself, please contact your Pastoral Team or email me directly opendoor@bexhillacademy.org

Victoria Ransom
Mental Health First Aid Lead

