

T-Bulletin

The school's new Temporary Bulletin

03 April 2020

1. Update from Mr Shapland

Say what you will about education over the last two weeks, the last fortnight has certainly been about learning. Whether it's learning how to find the area under a curve in an on-line Maths lesson, or how to get along a little bit better with our family in an enclosed space, I'm sure we have all learnt a little more about how we behave in extraordinary times. It is at times like these that we are all reminded that children's mental health and well-being is more important than academic rigour; a good book can be a useful middle ground, particularly as we approach what would have been the holidays!

As I write, we have just received confirmation of the details of the process schools will be expected to follow to support the exam boards in their awarding of grades to Year 11 and Year 13 students. As someone who has worked with these students at Ashlyns, for nearly 5 and 7 years respectively, I am acutely aware of how hard they have worked, how invested they are and, consequently, how proud I am of them for all their achievements, in the widest sense. The section below outlines how the process will work in a little more detail and includes a link to a letter for students sent by the head of Ofqual. On first read through, the process described looks fair and reasonable and so I am hopeful all our students' accomplishments will be duly recognised and rewarded.

Over the last few weeks, I have been reminded every day of the exceptional community we work with. Our staff have embraced our new way of working (many of them juggling their own children's home learning at the same time). Our students have engaged incredibly well and have reached out to their teachers with their work as well as for support and guidance. And of course, we have had staff volunteers keeping the school open for the children of critical, key workers and other vulnerable individuals.

The very many emails I have received from official channels have offered clear and helpful advice; however, it made me smile when one of these landed in my in box at the end of the day last Friday with a footnote on box sets recommendations! I am now holding out for recommendations on a good virtual barber.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the key message that we always deliver at the end of a school term to all our students: stay safe. These are unprecedented times, but I have already heard so many stories of our local community working together to support each other. We all have a part to play in staying in contact, helping to lift each others' spirits, and remaining motivated and ready to learn so that we are ready to repair and heal when the current crisis subsides.

2. Year 11 and Year 13

Today OFQUAL (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) has released further information for schools, students and parents/carers regarding the process which will be put in place to award grades for students in Year 11 and Year 13 this summer; we are already planning how our teachers and support staff will implement this in school over the coming weeks.

Please be reassured that OFQUAL has worked closely with exam boards and teaching bodies to ensure that the grades awarded will honestly and fairly represent the grades students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams as planned. OFQUAL is confident that these results will be published by the dates they would be available under normal circumstances, and may possibly be available a little earlier. The following links provide further information.

[OFQUAL letter to students](#)

[OFQUAL guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers](#)

Next steps for Year 11 and 13 students. We have also been working hard to ensure that Year 11 and Year 13 students can access a detailed programme of independent learning and tasks after the Easter/Spring break, which will help them to prepare and stay motivated for the next steps in their education or employment - further details will be provided in due course.

Students of the Week

ART

Thibaud C Y12, Isabel D Y7,
Daisy G Y13

ENGLISH

Megan A Y9, Rishka B Y7,
Kyle B Y8, Ollie D Y8, Ella H
Y8, Jessica H Y8, Violet Y8,
Max I Y7, Nicola K Y7,
Paddy R Y10, Khari W Y7,
Keiron W Y8

FOOD TECHNOLOGY

Emma A Y10, Daisy L Y10

GEOGRAPHY

Iris B Y7, Emma R Y7
Beth S Y9

MATHS

Joely B Y9, Gabe C Y10,
Jude D Y10, Ollie F Y10,
Anna H Y8, Esmat S Y8

MFL

Daisy B Y9, Kate H Y11,
Mia L Y8

PE

Lottie B Y8, Agatha P Y8
Sophie S Y7

SCIENCE

Fred B Y10, Loli D Y10

YEAR 7

Katie A, Isabel D, Rebecca H,
Ethan M, Thomas O, Alex W,
Owen W

YEAR 8

Agatha P, Bella T

YEAR 9

Eloise C, Daisy T

YEAR 10

Fred B, Loli D

YEAR 11

James D, Sebastian R

3. Remote Learning

Over the last fortnight, we have all had to adjust to a very different world of education. Teachers have scheduled online remote learning; tutors and Heads of Year have been monitoring wellbeing and supporting students who have been struggling (please do remind your child to click 'submit' when the tutor sets the weekly check-in!); the safeguarding team have been supporting the most vulnerable; and behind the scenes we continue to adapt as more details and guidance emerge. We've detailed the key themes, which have emerged from our surveys last week, below and I'm very grateful for your suggestions - these will help to inform our planning for Remote Learning following the Easter break.

On which note, I would ask that students, and staff, ensure they do take a step back from school work and at least try to have a holiday from work, even if it's a more confined version than is usual.

4. Feedback from Surveys

Thank you to all (students, staff and parents) who responded to our stakeholder survey last week. Key messages were that 92% said that their children can access and understand all or most of the work set, with more than two-thirds believing we were getting the volume of work set right.

Students have expressed how confident they feel in contacting teachers if they are stuck with their learning. It has also been heartwarming to receive so many positive comments from you appreciating how staff have adapted so quickly; all of these have been passed on to staff. We have also taken on board some helpful feedback regarding various logistical concerns, as well as refinements regarding the amount of work set, and are in the process of working to resolve some of these. Likewise, we will continue to ensure that students receive feedback and rewards for the work they complete, and attached you will find our latest list of Students of the Week for engagement and effort in last week's learning.

We would like to stress that students work in very different ways and at different speeds, and that when they have tried to complete a lesson's tasks to the best of their ability, with distractions such as phones removed as far as possible, they should feel confident to stop when they have reached the end of the time for that lesson. We appreciate that this is a stressful time for all, and students should manage their workloads appropriately. We are continually reviewing the amount of work set.

5. Wellbeing

Just Talk (justtalkherts.org) have published an excellent guide of five ways to look after wellbeing for secondary students. This will be made available to all students via google classroom but you can also find it here:

<https://www.justtalkherts.org/media/documents/five-ways-to-wellbeing-for-secondary.pdf>

Actively guiding students through this resource and discussing which items you could all engage with is a great way to establish new routines and positive habits for now and the future.

6. Dr Kathy Weston update

We are pleased to announce that Ashlyns School will be working on a pilot project with Dr Kathy Weston, a national expert in empowering parents to support their children. We will work with Kathy to produce evidence based resources, which are responsive to your immediate needs. To help us to help you as swiftly as possible we would be grateful if you could answer this short anonymous questionnaire outlining your concerns regarding students coping with social distancing and remote learning by Friday 10 April.

<https://forms.gle/4jjBgJDaQ1U8topk6>

7. Support for the NHS and Social Care

As with many schools, we have audited and packaged PPE equipment found in school and are liaising with HCC over its distribution; our minibuses are also on standby to be requisitioned as required. A big, and humble, thank you to all our parents involved in roles as key workers.

ASA Update

COMEDY NIGHT The ASA hopes to reschedule this event in the Autumn Term as a way to welcome back parents and introduce those new to the school.

Further ASA updates can be found on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/191081314278066/> or contact via: asa@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk

Thank you from local senior citizens

Students of 7R1 sent letters of friendship and reassurance to the elderly residents of Ashlyns Care Home during these uncertain times. The residents were delighted and shared their heartwarming thank you with us.



8. Trip updates

We have already been in contact with parents affected by trips cancelled over the Easter period; we are awaiting insurance confirmation for remaining trips that had been booked for the summer term, and will be in contact with individual families affected in the coming weeks.

9. Safeguarding

Some key reminders over the Easter period:

- Students must continue to follow government guidance about social distancing and staying at home. Please allow emergency services to focus their efforts where they are most needed.
- The school site is private property and students should not be on the premises, except for those few who are classed as children of critical workers and are attending supervised sessions
- Although no work will be set over these two weeks, Heads of Year will continue to set wellbeing challenges
- Students can continue to access support through Kooth (free online counselling) throughout this period
- Our safeguarding team remains active and onhand as always during the holiday period. If you do have any concerns or questions, please email admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk writing 'safeguarding' in the title

The government has also updated guidance for parents wanting further support on keeping their children safe online, with the following links:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC)

10. SEND

Please use the link below to access additional SEND resources provided through Hertfordshire's local offer:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/resources-for-parents-and-professionals/send-documents-and-resources.aspx?searchInput=&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=card>

11. Easter Opening for the children of Critical Workers

All parents who have self-identified as critical workers have been contacted regarding any requirements for provision of supervision in school over the Easter break. If requirements change, please contact admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk writing critical worker in the title, giving 12 hours' notice. All spaces must be pre-booked to ensure we have adequate, safe levels of staff supervision. If children can stay at home, they should.