



Update 1st May 2020

I hope that everyone is well. It seems incredible to think that an entire summer holiday period has passed since schools closed. Normally, if we said to children they could have an extra 6 weeks away from school, they would be absolutely ecstatic! However, due to the conditions placed upon us, students are definitely realising that schools provide them with so much more than education. The social interaction with friends, teachers, school staff and visitors is everything schools should be about. I think it's safe to say that when a child is at school, never again will they have so many people to engage with and often develop lifelong friendships. From a personal point of view, it's something I try and work hard to maintain, as far too often it is easy to remain at my desk and complete what sometimes seems endless paperwork and policies. Schools are about people and hopefully this can return for all of us as soon as possible.

Staff video

Thanks to all the staff who took part in the attached video. Please enjoy.

<https://www.facebook.com/139523596191615/posts/2084837491660206/?vh=e&d=n>

Year 11

Heads of department have now completed their GCSE predictions for all students. The process has been thorough and I'm delighted with how everyone within the school has pulled together for the benefit of this year 11. What is also very clear is that due to the hard work of teachers and staff in previous years, students will receive the grades befitting their abilities and efforts. Schools have been told that previous performance will be taken into account when scrutinising the grades awarded by teachers. To keep it as simple as possible, because Woodham has produced very good GCSE grades for a number of years now, the principle is that this would have continued again this year. Schools who predict a set of results which are different to the 'norm', may well find these adjusted.

Please keep an eye on the website for any further college updates. The website will be changing ever so slightly in the coming days, with a dedicated year 11 tab on the homepage. We will be placing any information for the year group within this tab. I had one parent contact me last week slightly confused with regards to the college transition work. To clarify, most of the work being sent by colleges at the moment is for vocational courses, (e.g. plumbing). If you were intending to do the bridging week activities for colleges like Q.E. or Durham Sixth Form, these will still take place during their originally proposed timescale.

Finally, thank you for replying to the email giving your permission to share personal details with colleges. As I write this update, we are awaiting approximately 30 more student replies, but these individuals will be contacted directly as to not miss out. If you think one of your friends may well be amongst this 30, please encourage their reply asap.

Cont...

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Year 10

Year 10 have certainly risen to the challenge of distance learning. I am aware that for most of you, there is uncertainty and worry. 'How will this impact on my GCSE's?' 'Am I falling behind?' 'I will never be able to catch up' All of these will be common thoughts and totally understandable. My response to them all is simple; 'Trust us, we know what we are doing'. GCSE results over recent years have been a particular strength of Woodham. The ethos of the school is now very much focussed on making sure that all students leave their 5 years of education with a set of results that allow them to make their next steps into education, training or employment. I am absolutely clear that the staff in this school are dedicated to their students and once we return to normal, they will see an intervention and 'catch up' programme befitting of our brilliant students. Well done to everyone who is working so hard. Keep it going. For those of you who are struggling, seek help via staff emails.

Years 7, 8 & 9

Keep working hard everyone. Having looked at the completion of work spreadsheets from previous weeks, I know that the vast majority of you continue to impress your teachers. Heads of Learning will be making a few calls home over the next few days to see if any students need some additional support. Remember, staying in good working routines will make your move back into school far easier.

New Website

Due to the increase in website updates, you will notice a slight change in the homepage over the coming days. We are creating 4 main boxes; Updates, Year 11, SEN and Year 6. Once you click on these boxes, the contents are specific to these groups. Hopefully you will find it far easier to find the information you are looking for.

Government announcement

The Prime Minister made it clear that he will be announcing how the country will be coming out of lockdown in his briefing on Thursday 7th May. It is expected he will discuss schools reopening as part of the overall plan. If we look at how other countries have handled the reopening of schools, what is fairly certain is that the entire school community will not be returning at the same time. The principle of social distancing is expected to be in place for a number of weeks yet and this will apply to schools. Once we are clearer on government plans, we will communicate with parents as soon as possible.

And finally...

I genuinely like my job. I enjoy coming to work, mainly because of the people in this building (when they are all here!). Having been a teacher for nearly 20 years, I am also clear that education has improved significantly. I remember being at school as a pupil. Relationships with teachers? Trips and visits? Quality of resources? Dedication of staff? Support and Welfare? I'm fairly certain these things were there, but what we have nowadays is in a different world to the 1980's. With this in mind I thought you might like to make a comparison to the lesson within the attachment. **Before you click** the link, think about what you remember your PE lessons to have been like. Ask you children what their PE lessons are like at Woodham. Think about how you expect your children's teachers to conduct themselves. Think about how you would motivate children. Think about your expectations of health and safety. Think about your expectation of uniform / kit. Enjoy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu-5LCr1kww>

Stay safe,



Andrew Bell
Headteacher

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