

12 October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to say an enormous thank you to all the support that you and your children have shown regarding the wearing of face coverings. On Monday morning almost every pupil who should be wearing one had a covering on. We have worked this week on remembering to always put the face covering on between one lesson and the next.

I would also like to thank all the staff for continuing to speak with pupils about why we are wearing face coverings and the patience that staff and pupils are showing towards all the restrictions that are in place.

Black History Month – Mrs Genders

We marked the start of Black History Month with a Trust wide assembly delivered by some of our Kimberley students and by Trust staff. Wootton pupils were also involved, but on this occasion did not present part of the assembly. Please find the link to the assembly here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qBeXKBhrHrQI12SANgk0bKU34yCxDGnY/view?usp=sharing>

We want to make sure that everyone feels respected, included and safe in our community. As you will note from the assembly, we are setting up a focus group for students and staff across both Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College. The aim is to work together to develop inclusion and diversity awareness.

Results from The Harpur Trust Virtual Art Competition 2020 Awards - Mrs Wetherell, Head of Art

Congratulations to all of our pupils who entered this competition; once again our pupils have won awards in Category 4 of The Harpur Trust Schools Art Competition. Category 4 is the 14 – 16 age range [Years 10 – 11]. The theme of the competition was the *Fabric of Bedford*. Our pupils' entries were submitted into the competition the day that school closures were announced. The prizes were announced in a live broadcast from The Higgins Gallery, Bedford on Thursday 8th October.

Prize winners:

- ❖ 2nd prize: **Bobbie Stratford, 11MG** [2019 – 2020]
[£200 art materials for the Art Department and £30 voucher for Bobbie]
- ❖ 3rd prize: **Eva Diedrick, 11NWE**
[£100 art materials for the Art Department and £15 voucher for Eva]

Commendations:

Thomas Felts-King 11ACA and Aaliyah Platt 11GEL

The entries of **Emily Chapman, 11MG** [2019 – 2020], **Felicity Vasey, 11KMC** and **Nyah Davies, 11JWI** have also been selected for display in the exhibition.

Well done to all pupils whose work was selected. To read more about the competition visit:

<https://www.harpurtrust.org.uk/article/465/celebrating-our-2020-artists>

Pupil Success – Mrs K. Clarke, KS4 English Co-ordinator

Niamh Whelan, 11NWE entered and won two competitions during lockdown. One was a poetry competition that Mrs Clarke set as an extended learning task and the other the Bernie Simons Essay Competition. The Bernie Simons Essay Competition invited pupils from Year 9 to Year 13 in state schools across England to write an essay on Civil Liberties.

Niamh's essay was one of six selected by the judges as winning entries. Niamh's prize is a place on a mentoring programme whereby Niamh will benefit from a combination of work experience, career mentoring and academic resources sponsored by Simons, Muirhead and Burton a leading London law firm set up by the late human rights advocate, Bernie Simon.

To read more please go to <https://smab.co.uk/news/>

Mrs Clarke commented that *"Niamh never ceases to amaze me - congratulations on such a phenomenal achievement!"*

Pupil Voice

I have met with several groups of pupils this week to ask their views on how they feel about school. Some of the key points they have made are:

- ❖ They like having year specific gates and would like to keep this system.
- ❖ They feel safe at school and that pupils are complying with the safety measures we are putting in place such as social distancing, sanitising and face coverings
- ❖ They would like really clear resources to tell them what they have learnt and what they will learn next
- ❖ They would like help in how to organise their work at home, and how to get really useful support from a teacher when they are working at home.

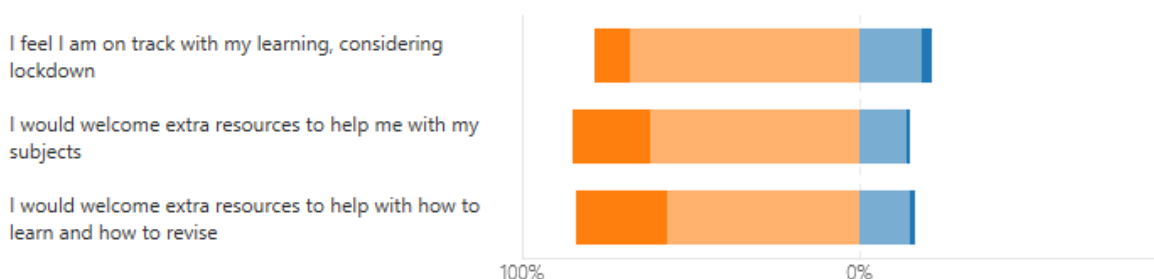
Many pupils have completed our survey regarding how we can support them. Responses give us really clear data regarding what support pupils in each year group would like, and will be used to tailor the way we teach and any extra resources and sessions we provide.

Please find an example of some of the broader questions we asked and the results we have received. We can then drill down to year groups, and individual responses.

4. In general in terms of your learning and progress:

[More Details](#)

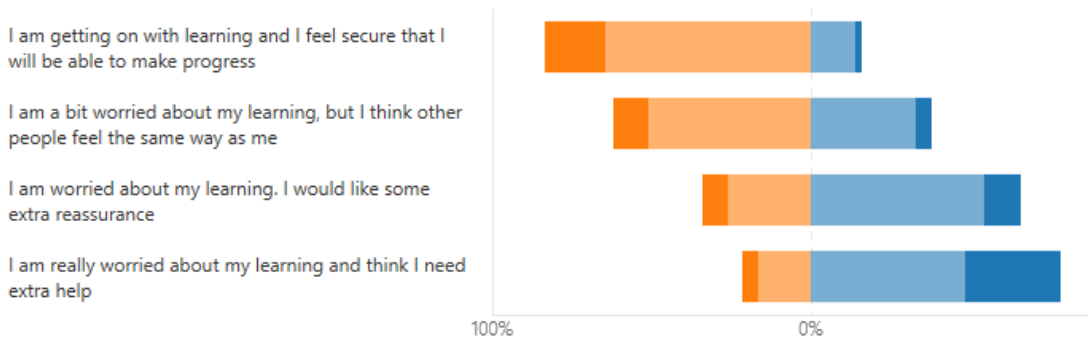
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



5. In terms of your feelings and attitudes:

[More Details](#)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



Self-isolating

We do have a number of families at any time who are self-isolating. For those pupils who are at home, and not unwell, staff should provide work. To make this manageable: on day one you should expect your child to have year specific English, maths and science work. From day 2, your child will receive the resources for each lesson they are missing, before the day starts so that they can continue with a normal timetable. Work set will be emailed via your child's school email address.

Kimberley College Virtual Open Evening for Transfer into Year 12 in 2021:

If you have a child in Year 11, I would like to draw attention to the Kimberley College Virtual Open Evening being held on **Wednesday 14th October starting at 5 pm**. There is lots of information already on the college website about the courses being offered, the support available and what it is like to be a student at Kimberley College.

<https://www.kimberleycollege.co.uk/>

Wootton Academy Trust ring fences up to 200 places for Wootton Upper School Year 11 pupils who meet the College's admissions criteria. However, it is really important pupils apply for places by the deadline **Monday 30 November**. The College will be oversubscribed and we would not want any of our pupils to miss out on the opportunity of studying in the largest Sixth Form in Bedfordshire.

Transfer to Year 9 at Wootton Upper School in September 2021

If you have a child in Year 8, all links are still available on our website and applications **MUST** be made by 31st October to join Wootton Upper School next September. Please do get in touch if you need help in submitting your application.

Royal British Legion Poppy Day Appeal November 2020

This year we cannot sell poppies in school because of the Covid 19 restrictions that are in place. However, we are committed to supporting the RBL Poppy Day Appeal. Therefore, we will be holding a mufti day on Friday 23rd October to raise money.

Pupils and staff will be asked to contribute at least £2 putting money into buckets on arrival at the school. The money collected will be quarantined over half term, and this means we can share a total with you in the week of 11th November. That week our assembly will mark the courage and efforts of those who lost their lives, from all backgrounds and cultures, but focusing especially on our local community.

Wootton Upper School Local Governing Board vacancies

The Local Governing Board which oversees the work of Wootton Upper School has a vacancy for a parent governor and also a vacancy for a teaching staff governor. The Governing Board meets each half-term. The parent/carer of any registered pupil in Year 9, Year 10 or Year 11 is welcome to put their name forward for the parent governor vacancy and any member of the Trust staff who teaches at Wootton Upper School is eligible to apply for that vacancy. In the first instance, if you think you may be interested in either vacancy, please contact our HR Officer, HR@wootton.beds.sch.uk who will arrange for you to talk to Mr Gleeson about governance arrangements at the Trust. We will seek nominations formally after half term.

Good neighbours – parking at the front of the school

We would like to ask for your help and support in enabling us to maintain good relations with the residents who live closest to the school. There is limited parking at the front of the school and some of the cars which arrive to collect our pupils are being parked on private land opposite the school, or, where they are parked on the carriageway blocking entrances to people's property.

Bedfordshire Police and our Borough Councillor, Cllr John Wheeler, have both asked us to bring this matter to your attention in our newsletter. At the beginning of the school year we asked that where children are being collected by private car, parents/carers refrained from arriving before the buses had left which would mean that parents/carers could then drive onto the site to collect children. We would hope that almost all parents/carers could manage to do this, since our 2:30 pm finish is much earlier than other schools. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs McMorn

Head of School