

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Friday 24 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Ramadan

This newsletter should reach you around the time of sunset this evening. Sunset tonight marks the start of Ramadan. Given lockdown and the inability of families to come together to share food after sunset this year, Ramadan will be very different to previous years. I am always impressed by the perseverance of our Muslim pupils to maintain their observance of fasting from sunrise to sunset throughout Ramadan.

Numbers in our schools

At Wootton Upper School we had 10 pupils in today; this has been the average number for the week. We are pleased to be able to support the parents/carers of key workers and other children whose needs mean they are encouraged to be in school. Across the family of schools 94 children were in school today.

In school support – Mrs McMorn

We have had a range of pupils in school on the Wootton site, enabling their key worker parents to go to work. We asked them about their experiences. Here is what they said:

- ❖ *I have made new friends in different years, and people you don't usually get to know.*
- ❖ *I have got to know people and found they are really different from what I thought.*
- ❖ *The routine is really good. PE every day is great; there is friendly competition and a whole range of activities we can choose from. I really like it when the teachers join in.*
- ❖ *I have got to know some teachers better and I like that.*
- ❖ *We did some fun activities like an Easter Egg hunt, we made up a song, played hide and seek.*
- ❖ *I enjoyed cooking – muffins and popcorn and cookies. We looked after the 'babies' and tried to make sure they didn't cry – we really liked that.*
- ❖ *The teachers have been kind and fair.*
- ❖ *It is really good when they do special lessons for us. We have done some graphics and DT*
We would like to thank all the teaching and support staff who have come in on a rota and worked with the children in school.



Distance Learning Support – Mr Frazer

Early next week we plan to publish the timetable when teachers will be able to give a quick response to learners who email them in respect of challenges they are facing with completing work on Show My Home Work. Thank you for being patient.

Next Monday we will publish this week's data for the percentages of students accessing work on the platform.

Staffing Update

In Monday's newsletter we told you about vacancies we still need to fill at the Trust. We are currently advertising or will be very early next week advertising for the following posts for September:

- ❖ Teacher of Business Studies [already advertised on the website]
- ❖ Teacher of Food Studies
- ❖ Teacher of Physics
- ❖ Teacher of Chemistry
- ❖ Teacher of Mathematics

Please help us by letting your friends and families know about these opportunities. Our school and college are great places to work and we have lots of fantastic young people who are a delight to teach. Please do get in touch with me or our HR Officer, Kami Patel hr@wootton.beds.sch.uk if you would like more information. Thank you.

We also asked if you would encourage students who you know are graduating this summer interested in a career in teaching to get in touch with the Trust. We are pleased to say that one student has already been in touch which is great news, as we are confident they will make a superb teacher. We have put that person in touch with a local Teacher Training provider with whom we work in partnership.

We are grateful for the questions and suggestions that some Year 9 parents and carers have submitted in respect of Business Studies and Food Technology. We are working our way through these and we hope to include a summary of your comments with responses, in the form of FAQs early next week.

Free School Meals

Throughout the country parents and carers who have children eligible for Free School Meals are still experiencing difficulties with the e-voucher scheme introduced to enable families to get food from a number of different supermarket chains during the lock down. A number of parents/carers have contacted Mrs McMenamy and Mrs Sampson to thank them for all their help in resolving issues. Both colleagues are genuinely touched by the comments many parents/carers have emailed to them and would like to thank the people who have sent them. Thank you. Twenty-five percent of our families eligible for Free School Meals elected to continue with Food Parcels instead of e-vouchers. Our latest delivery took place yesterday; thanks go to Miss Brightman, Mr Darlow, Mrs Darlow, Mrs Genders, Mr Hance, Mr Malciw, Mr and Mrs Worrall for their help and support. Thank you.

Information: increased fraud risk during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

The Education, Skills Funding Agency sent this email to schools and asked us to share it with parents and carers and Post 16 students receiving Bursaries. Thank you to Ms. Nichols who emailed it to all our bursary students and their parents earlier. We feel it is important that all parents/carers are aware of the message and therefore, include here:

Periods of instability, such as during the coronavirus pandemic, bring an increased risk of fraud.

Fraudsters will actively exploit these difficult times and will target vulnerable areas for financial gain.

We have been informed some learners and parents have received a letter from ESFA asking for personal learner bank details in relation to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

We never ask for personal bank account details. This is a fraudulent letter – please do not respond.

Where possible, it would be helpful for institutions to share this message with parents and students through your communication channels.

Please keep safe and thank you for your support in so many different ways.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust