

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Friday 26 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Today, we come to the end of our first week of face-to-face contact for Year 10 and Year 12 learners attending school and college. Everyone has adapted quickly to the safety procedures that have been put in place to keep everybody safe. This includes scanning the temperature of all learners and all staff when they arrive at Kimberley College or Wootton Upper School. This is usually in excess of 150 people across both sites. We are keen to let you know that no-one has presented with a temperature, and we have not had to deal with any Covid-19 related symptoms.

We have received some lovely messages from you saying how your children have enjoyed being in college and school and thanking individual members of staff for their help and support where children were anxious when they first arrived. Judging by all the smiling faces on our learners' faces, and also the smiles on staff faces everybody is happy by being able to be back in school. Clearly, we are very conscious that Year 9 learners cannot yet return and we continue to work hard to support this cohort with distance learning. On Monday next week, we will be writing to Year 9 parents offering them the opportunity to come into school for a face-to-face meeting in the week beginning Monday July 6. Please look out for that letter.

In terms of the proportion of learners who have attended lessons this week, we are delighted that **80%** of Year 10 pupils spent one day in school this week. We very much hope that over the next three weeks, this will increase to between 85% - 90%. We know there are some parents/carers have very real and compelling reasons why their children cannot return at the moment. The attendance of Year 12 attending lessons at Kimberley this week has been **88%**.

Our staff have been delighted to welcome Year 10 and 12 learners back into classrooms. We would like to share some of their comments with you.

Mrs Coulson, Head of Geography:

It was wonderful to see my Year 12 students at Kimberley on Monday, even if it was only a third of them and they seemed pretty shell-shocked to be back, or maybe that was just because they aren't used to being awake at that time! It was great to be able to discuss with them, not just the work that we have been covering remotely, but also the whole experience of lockdown and how they have coped and what they have been doing.

Being at Wootton with the full-time provision has also been a positive experience; it is good to be able to discuss the problems the pupils find when trying to complete distance learning work - it means as a teacher we can also learn from this and improve our practice for future weeks. Overall, the experience for the children of key workers - who have been in school all this time when others have been at home - has been very positive - they are coping amazingly.

Miss Wilkinson, Teacher of English and Pupil Leadership Co-ordinator:

It has been wonderful being back in school working with our brilliant pupils, each bringing their own unique qualities to the sessions. I am truly humbled by the pupils' superb effort in lessons and dedication to their studies. Their focus has been fab- their humour and laughter has been a delight and hugely missed. I cannot wait to continue working with them in the coming weeks.



Ms. Clarke, KS 4 English Co-ordinator:

It was a truly magical moment returning to school on Monday after three months of only being able to interact with pupils remotely. Despite all the wonderful work being produced by pupils via distant learning, it has been amazing to finally be able to welcome pupils back and teach them face-to-face. As for the pupils, they have been absolutely remarkable in every aspect. Their behaviour, attitude and willingness to adapt has been astounding and I am really looking forward to teaching them all again next week.

Mrs Davis, KS 5 English Co-ordinator:

Teaching English Lit in a science lab with no books on the hottest day of the year with rubber gloves and lots of sanitisers on the desk was a surreal experience but a great one. The college was eerily quiet but it was lovely see my Yr12 students again. I was impressed by their positive approach to this odd experience that we are all living through. After initial complaints about the high, hard stools and clinical surroundings we went on to have some lively debates, something that can't be replicated in any other way. We have all missed interaction with each other and sharing our thoughts and feelings. We left feeling positive about what we had achieved so far and what we can do until we are all back together. As we headed out into the hot sunshine I overheard one student say 'that was so much better than discussing the literary interpretation of poetry with the cat!'

Mrs Page, Teacher of Mathematics, PSHCE Co-ordinator and Professional Tutor:

It has been so fantastic to be back in school! My favourite parts have been the quick catch ups with other staff and actually being able to explain the Maths that we have been hoping pupils can access remotely. It is seeing the pupils in front of me, asking questions (when prompted, they have all been really quiet!) and ensuring their understanding just reminds me why I love to teach. Remote teaching has, of course, been our only option but nothing can compare to being able to teach face to face. Roll on having everyone back!

Mr Spurling, Assistant Principal

I would like to thank all the Year 10 pupils who have been fantastic in their return to the school this week. It has been an absolute pleasure to see them and they have embraced the new systems during these very challenging times. I would also like to thank all the staff who have been involved in a superbly co-ordinated response to the situation, they too have mentioned the joy of seeing more pupils return to school. We look forward to continuing this over the next few weeks.

To support the school further, we ask that parents remind pupils that the weather is very hot at the moment and that it is important for them to wear appropriate clothing for school. Please ensure they have a good supply of water, and snacks for their break. They should also remember: shorts should be knee length, no midriffs showing, and shoulders should be covered (no vests tops). We would also strongly advise applying sun lotion before leaving the house, and bringing extra. Do remember we are happy for all our pupils to bring their own sanitiser and tissues.

Thank you again for your continued support.



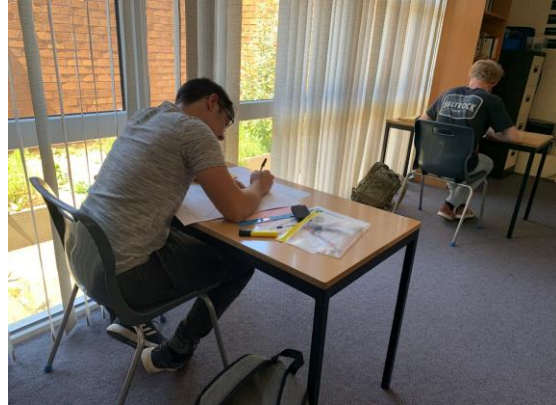
Year 10 Bubble with Mr Herridge



Year 10 Bubble with Mr McTernan



Year 10 Bubble with Mrs Page



Year 10 Bubble



Year 12 Maths with Mr Bodo



Year 12 Biology



Year 12 Government and Politics

Thanks to Mrs Genders for submitting the images for the newsletter.

Distance Learning Update

Mr Frazer has provided information on the percentage of learners logging on to Show My Homework, last week. Learners are continuing to work hard and thank you for your help in encouraging them to do so. Year 9 has slipped a bit this week.

If your child is not accessing and completing work, please let the Pastoral Team know.

Wootton Upper School	Y9	Y10
Pupils logged in Monday 8 June - Friday 12 June	88%	93%

Kimberley College	Y12
Students logged in Monday 8 June - Friday 12 June	88%

Dr Mackay commented, *"if submission of homework is via Show My Homework and where learners have completed their work on paper, we would encourage them to take a photo of their work and submit this on Show My Homework. This provides teachers with an understanding of the work that has been completed and supports teachers to feedback to the class."*

Year 12 students who have so far registered for UCAS 2021

Mrs Stewart is very pleased that the number of Year 12 students who have now registered for UCAS has increased to 174. Mrs Stewart commented, *"Well done to the 174 year 12 students who have registered and started the UCAS application process over the last two weeks. If you have not yet done so, please use the information provided on SMH in order to register."* Please remind your son/daughter to email Mrs. Stewart if you, or they, have any questions or problems with the registration process. cstewart@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Email to Mrs Ashton from Katrine Redman, Kimberley student

Last weekend Mrs Ashton received the following email from Katrine, a student at Kimberley. Katrine has given her permission for us to share this email with you.

Hi Mrs Ashton,

I am writing to thank you very much for all your help over the last few years. I really enjoyed my Biology lessons and appreciate all the hard work that went into them.

Since May I have been working in the lab at the UK Biocentre in Milton Keynes, analysing COVID-19 samples. It's an amazing opportunity, especially since I am the only A-level student employed, and most of the other lab workers are post-graduates. It's been great to put things I have learnt from school into practice and to learn lots of new skills. I've decided to continue working there longer term and to reapply for university next year to study Chemistry and Biology. Thank you very much for writing the reference for this job.

I hope that everything is well with you.

Thanks again,

Katrine

Staff Recruitment

I have not written recently on the challenge of recruiting staff for September over the last few weeks; however, we have been working very hard to fill our remaining teaching vacancies. With three weeks to the end of term we still have three vacancies to fill. We are interviewing next week and I am keeping my fingers crossed.

The work load on our HR Officer, Ms Kami Patel, has been immense during this period and the Board is indebted to her for hard work. We are ALL the beneficiaries of Ms Patel's efforts and most of all, our pupils and students. Our recruitment challenge reflects the national picture. Before the end of term, I will provide you with a further update.

If you have a son or daughter, who graduates from university this summer, who does not yet have a job, and who may be interested in working at either the school or the college next year, please do ask them to send me an email. We are likely to have a number of roles, not least related to the government's scheme designed to help learners catch-up.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust

Wootton Academy Trust operates:
Wootton Upper School & Arts College
Kimberley 16-19 STEM College
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