

Dear Parents and Carers

During this challenging period I am intending to provide weekly updates for you all, hopefully to reassure you, but also to pass on key information. I'm delighted to say that in nearly all ways our second full week of lessons has been excellent. Students continue to be focused and positive in lessons and we remain very impressed at how they have adjusted to being back in school.

Covid matters

Whilst we are reviewing a couple of arrangements, safe working for students and staff on site is going well. Our biggest challenge has been that several staff have had to be at home whilst waiting for family members to obtain tests and results – in most cases because their children have been sent home from school or nursery and told not to come back until tested. The delays in the testing system locally and nationally have made this a significant frustration for us, and I have shared the impact of this with key people locally. However, we are delighted that we've been able to trial some staff teaching lessons from home, being 'beamed' into classrooms here, and that this has gone well. We will continue to seek positive solutions to the difficulties that are sent our way.

Attendance continues to be strong, thank you. There remains some confusion about colds/headaches ... basically if you would normally have sent your son or daughter to school, and they don't have any of the three key symptoms, then they should attend – we really don't want students missing learning unless absolutely necessary. The flow chart at the bottom of this mail may help you to decide whether a student should be in or not.

Finally on this, I'd like to reassure you that we have plans in place that will 'spring into action' if we learn of a positive test result in staff or students. You'll be aware that some schools or year groups have had to close; whilst we hope this doesn't have to happen, it may be necessary, and we'll need to inform you quickly if so.

Other updates

Our 'Open Evening' materials for year 6 students are now live on our website. Many of our students have been absolute stars in contributing to these. Do have a look if you have time, and definitely pass this link onto any parents of year 6 students so that they can find out as much about GWA as possible: <https://www.gwacademy.co.uk/joining-us/admissions>

- Years 8 and 9 will have assessments in core subjects next week so that we can track their progress since joining GWA. These would ordinarily have taken place in the summer. Mr Clarke has sent further details to you if your child is sitting these, and we hope to share some very positive news about the outcomes in due course.
- We remain frustrated that your access to your son or daughter's homework tasks has not yet been possible to set up. We sincerely hope this will be available next week, and I apologise for the delay.

To and from school We have reminded students this week of the need for courtesy and safe behaviour as they walk or cycle to school, and that our behaviour policy applies during this time. Senior staff are regularly out and about to monitor this. We have also reminded students that the "Rule of Six" applies to them – they must not stop and gather in larger groups as this is against the current law. We'd be very grateful if you can reinforce this, following a small number of concerns from members of the public.

Thank you as always for your support and encouragement of your son or daughter's learning. We will be back in touch next week – have a very good weekend.

Graham Davis
Principal

