



Battle Abbey School
Battle
East Sussex
TN33 0AD
Telephone 01424 772385
Facsimile 01424 773573

Headmaster: David Clark, BA, M Phil (Cantab)

Letter to parents 26th June 2020

Dear parents,

I hope you have enjoyed the scorching temperatures this week – but, every time I look out of my office window, I feel a sense of injustice. This is, after all, the time when we would typically see many students on the front lawn, chatting in groups and enjoying the sunshine. There would usually be the wonderful sight on the sports field of tightly contested games of rounders or highly competitive races on sports day. Equally, we would be enjoying one of Mr Pawson’s much anticipated BBQs – a real feature of the summer term calendar. Instead, we are keeping our distance and throughout the lock-down, I have felt particularly sorry for our school leavers, essentially the entire Upper Sixth cohort. They are missing out on so many ‘rights of passage’ like their final assembly, leavers’ service and last summer ball. To all of them, we are so sorry and we will do all we can to re-schedule some of those key events to another time later in the year.

Despite the bad news facing the leavers, we have had a significant boost this week with the return of students in years 10 and 12 to the Abbey campus – and it has been genuinely uplifting having ‘real’ students back on site. The system seems to have worked well and I know that the students were delighted to be back and catching up with their friends. I know that Mr Tucker-Wall was pleased – as he had the chance to spend time with each GCSE artist and I am grateful to the Maths department for offering extra support to year 10s too.

This past week has seen us catching up with all our new joiners for September. We have hosted Zoom meetings for different year groups and have managed to speak with a large number of excited but anxious parents and pupils. The wonders of technology have also meant that we have been able to speak directly to our new boarders in every corner of the globe. Interestingly and almost without exception, they are not much worried about the virus in the UK – they are more concerned that the rich experience that they are anticipating may be curtailed by the restrictions. For their sake, and for all our students, let’s hope for as near a return to normality in September as possible.

Now that assessments and relevant de-briefs are complete, we are mixing things up a bit for next week – something that we would do as a matter of course if the school was running normally. The year 7 & 8 students will enjoy a structured activities week which will set them tasks and challenges that require far less time in front of a screen. All year 9 students will have a week of Pre GCSE lessons and I am confident that they will find those sessions hugely useful to confirm or otherwise their options choices for Year 10. We are also really looking forward to welcoming all the current Year 6 students from our Prep School... who will spend several days with us at the Abbey to aid them with transition and familiarization. The Year 12 students will be offered their customary leadership training and life skills courses – both really important programmes as they prepare to lead the school for the next academic year. The big event for next week, however, will be the staging of our first ever Virtual Sports Day. The PE department have been busy planning various activities and students will receive relevant details as part of Monday’s whole school assembly.

We have often said that, amid the challenges of lock-down, there have been many unexpected benefits. For me, one of those has been my involvement in the Pre University course for the Upper Sixth. I have taught an introductory course in Geo Politics and, as a group, we have spent time researching and discussing the complex issues facing the UK, the US, the EU, China and the African Continent. I have loved meeting up with the team each week and I have always come away feeling intellectually invigorated. I would therefore like to thank Kitty, Charlie, Hugh, William, Rhian, Luke and Alice for their commitment, their questions, their curiosity and, above all, their positive engagement – it certainly has been one of my lock-down highlights.

An equally valuable consequence of these past few weeks has been our interesting and innovative offerings on social media – created by both students and staff. Miss Mal (one of our social media 'stars') has been hugely impressed with the talented photographers and gardeners in the Battle Abbey community and she is very grateful for all the entries so far to the Flower Show in Photographs and she wanted me to remind you that entries close on Monday 29th June.

Before signing off, I want to assure you that we are putting together the finishing touches to our traditional end of term occasions and final details of those will be sent to you this time next week.

Here's to a lovely weekend to one and all.

Best wishes,

David Clark