



# WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

*Pride In Achievement*

Headteacher: Mr Steven Hogan  
Tel: 020 8504 9618

St Barnabas Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 7DQ  
www.woodbridgehigh.co.uk info@woodbridgehigh.co.uk

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Re: Covid-19 ('coronavirus')

I write with my final update of the term, and some information that may be helpful to you over the coming weeks.

### Good News

I start with some good news. We have received huge amounts of lovely support and encouragement from parents for the work we have been doing from afar to support students and the local community. I am very grateful for this; nearly all our staff are working from home and it can feel very isolating, and so sending them some lovely words of support can make a big difference. Some of our staff have been in school to supervise the children of critical workers, and I am very grateful to them as I am sure you are. We had a heartening response to our social media posts about the donation of science goggles to the NHS; it is a crying shame that this has even been necessary, but the speed at which we were able to respond, and the strength of feeling that we wanted to do something to help, says a lot about our community. Woodbridge is a lovely place to work at the best of times, but in these worst of times, we feel completely buoyed up and supported by our community and our parents. That is certainly very good news for a school like ours; I know it is not the case everywhere. When we come out of this, and we will, we will be ever the stronger for it.

### Distance Learning

Thank you for all your feedback over the last two weeks; it has been invaluable. It has been a quite a learning curve for parents, students and staff as we have attempted to adapt our tried-and-tested methods to distance learning. We continue to pass feedback on to teaching staff and develop new ways of setting the work so that it is manageable. Lots of families have been grateful for there being plenty to keep students busy, but I know that for some families the work set has caused some anxiety, especially where they have other pressures to juggle as well. Our principle has been that we would rather students have more than enough rather than not enough to get stuck in to, so that parents who really want to ensure their children do not get behind have lots to get them to focus on.

Please do not worry, though, if your child does not manage to complete everything that has been set. In lessons in school, teachers make judgements every day about whether to push an individual or group on, or to stop for now, but we are not able to do that from afar. At the moment you are in the best position to judge what your children will be able to manage, and so please do so. They should not be doing school work at the expense of their emotional wellbeing or mental health. Just drop teachers an email or a comment on Show My Homework if you want them to know why something hasn't been done.

Having said this, for safeguarding reasons we will continue to monitor each day whether students have logged on to Show My Homework and viewed the tasks being set, and submitted some work if this has been requested. We will contact students and / or parents to follow up where we have concerns that they are not engaging with school during the closure period.

### Easter Enrichment Activities

Today marks the end of the Spring Term, and although we haven't seen most of our students for two weeks, they are on holiday for two weeks from tomorrow! We will not be setting daily distance learning work during the holidays, but I have asked each year co-ordinator to get in touch with some enrichment work and activities that young people can do if they are bored while stuck at home over the next two weeks. Year co-ordinators have collated these from different subject areas and they should come out to you today. A Level or GCSE teachers might set some long-term project work or revision for students to do over the break, as they usually would.



## Rewards

We recognise that very many of our students are working tirelessly and we want to make sure they receive all the encouragement they deserve. Teachers are continuing to award Achievement Points and these will continue to count towards the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards that students are used to, and that we will give them when we are back at school. We will also be introducing a weekly achievement award after Easter, with the students with the highest achievement points each week receiving e-vouchers for Amazon that we will send to them. I will give you more details of this in due course. Please do keep encouraging your children to work hard!

## Student Wellbeing

We continue to do our best to monitor and support our students from a distance. Our Wellbeing Team will contact all of our students who are currently receiving mentoring or counselling each week and are providing telephone appointments where students are requesting this. We have also set up a dedicated wellbeing section on the website under Distance Learning, and we will update this regularly with resources and ideas. We will shortly be conducting a student wellbeing survey to find out what else we can do to help our students while they are away. As parents, please do let us know if you have any concerns about a child's wellbeing. You can email your child's form tutor or head of year, or the Wellbeing Team. Please see below for the link to the email addresses for all staff. If you are aware of a child protection issue, such as a child being neglected or abused, please email [childprotection@woodbridgehigh.co.uk](mailto:childprotection@woodbridgehigh.co.uk).

## Financial Advice

Please find attached some advice on the current level of financial support available from the Government and HMRC to individuals and businesses. This has been kindly provided by Baskin Walsh Accountants who have said that they are happy for us to share with parents. Please do bear in mind that this information is subject to change.

## Free School Meals

For families who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals, we will be using the government's voucher scheme to provide you with supermarket vouchers in place of these meals from 20 April for the duration of the closure period. Vouchers will be to the value of £15 per child and will be emailed to you weekly. You will be emailed an e-code which you will be able to convert into a voucher for one of the supermarkets on the list the government has published (currently Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose or M&S). If you feel you may be eligible for free school meals and would like to apply, you may do so at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>. Once your application has been approved by the Local Authority, we will be able to provide you with vouchers.

## Childcare Provision

This provision will continue after the holiday for the children of critical workers, or for those children who have Education, Health & Care Plans or who have social workers. Should you wish to book places on this provision for the week beginning Monday 20 April, please complete the online form here [Emergency Provision Booking Form](#) by 6pm today.

## Teacher Assessment Grades and Exams

We are expecting further details from Ofqual and the examination boards later today as to the system that is to be implemented for GCSE and A Level exams for years 11 and 13 this year. We have robust data systems in place that we will use to support our teacher assessment grades to be submitted to the exam boards to support their allocation of final grades to students. In the meantime, please bear with us and avoid contacting the senior team or multiple teachers to engage in discussion about what or how teacher assessment grades might be awarded. We will digest the information when we receive it and then let you know our processes.

Key Stage 3 (year 7, 8 and 9) exams, which would be due to start in April, and year 10 and 12 exams that should have started in May, will not take place this year. We are currently considering the best way to assess Key Stage 3, year 10 and year 12 students at the end of the year, and will let you know about this in due course.

## Staffing Update

We thank Maureen Clarke who leaves us today, having been covering in Business Studies for one term. Alex Kelly joins the Business Studies department after the Easter holidays. I can also confirm the following recent internal appointments:

Fitzroy Ellis-Stygal	Behaviour Support Officer
Joanne Board	Wellbeing Officer
Wendy Smith	Education Welfare and Family Liaison Officer
Amanda Baxter	Sixth Form Learning Mentor
Lucy Birch	Year 12 Co-ordinator
Amy Gold	Year 13 Co-ordinator

Lena Khudeza (Science), Farzana Minhas (English) and Katie Gibson (Admin Assistant) return from maternity leave after the Easter break.

We have also made very strong appointments for September in Geography, Computing, Business Studies, History, Science, Maths, English and MFL; I will give you more details in due course. The most recent of these interviews were conducted remotely over video conferencing. Even at these difficult times, it is essential that we have excellent teachers in place for September. As always, all of those interviewed, whether they got the job or not, had done their research by asking around and really wanted to work at Woodbridge. Our parents and kids have helped us build that reputation in the local area and it really does make a difference to the candidates we can attract; you are all absolute stars!

### **Communication**

The school will close today for the holidays and from then onwards we will close our phone lines until we return to school as normal after the crisis is over. Having the phone lines open each day requires us to have an additional member of staff on site and at this present time we would like to avoid this. If you call, you will be given a message asking you to email us. We will continue to monitor all emails, including the main [info@woodbridgehigh.co.uk](mailto:info@woodbridgehigh.co.uk) address, although I would ask parents to keep communication during the two week Easter holiday period to a minimum to allow staff to have a break away from work. Email addresses for all staff are available here: <https://www.woodbridgehigh.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=2395&type=pdf>. Please keep an eye on our social media for updates, and I will continue to write to you each week after the holiday period. We will only contact you in the next two weeks if it is an emergency.

### **And Finally**

What a fortnight it has been... probably the strangest of my life, and perhaps for you too. At the new virtual Woodbridge we have laughed, cried, cursed and screamed. We have been both wowed and frustrated by technology in the space of a few minutes. We have achieved things that just a few weeks ago seemed impossible, overcome issues with our wit and our collective wisdom. We have supported and encouraged each other from afar. We have celebrated achievement and cajoled young people into action. We have been as active and proactive as we can be. We have stood together, united as a community in the face of this most challenging situation, the like of which none of us has seen in our lifetimes. We have kept calm and carried on, as the cliché goes. We have done all this for one simple reason - because #wearewoodbridge, and Woodbridge is something special. I have said it before and I will say it again - I am so very proud of our school and our community. You are all amazing people.

If you are celebrating it, I wish you a very Happy Easter. Please do have a restful few weeks, whether celebrating or not. Switch off a little if you can. Keep your loved ones close, watch that box set you have been meaning to get in to, read some good books and perhaps go back to that hobby you once enjoyed. Look after yourselves and your families. Stay at home and do not take any risks. You, our ever supportive parents, together with all of the Team Woodbridge community, mean the world to me. My heartfelt best wishes go to all of you.

I will write again after the break.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hogan', with a horizontal line extending from the left and right sides.

Steven Hogan  
Headteacher

