



11 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all healthy and safe, having enjoyed the Bank Holiday weekend.

I write to you today, on what should have been the first day of the GCSE written examinations, 15 school days since the Easter holidays and 25 school days since our school officially closed on 20 March 2020 due to the national lockdown response to COVID-19. Your response to these unprecedented times has been phenomenal because of the care, understanding and support you have shown for all in our school community. Thank you!

That is not to say these times have not been without their challenges for us all. As a full time working mum with two teenage boys at home, I feel the challenges of my own circumstances daily and as I navigate through these times with my family I am confident that it is right to prioritise the physical and mental health of our children, encouraging them to understand our responsibilities within this national crisis. It is really important that we all remember that we are not just 'working from home'; we are 'in our homes, during a crisis, trying to work'. Please therefore continue to be kind to yourselves, be reasonable in your expectations given your individual family contexts and do keep your child's tutor informed as to how your child is getting on during their weekly communications with you.

At Toot Hill School we continue to set daily lessons for all children but do not want our children to get overly stressed by this; just to do their best to keep some structure to their day and to stay in the habit of learning, in its many forms. Thank you for taking the time to complete and return our survey last week to help inform the review of our current practice and our further planning. We have compiled a FAQ summary attached at the bottom of this letter for your information. Please be reassured that the teachers and leaders at our school are already planning how we will work with our students on our return to reconnect as a community and minimise any gaps in learning.

As I am sure you are aware our school has remained open for the children of our keyworkers throughout this time, including the Easter holidays, and I am very grateful to all staff, teaching, support and site who have enabled us to support our key worker families as they continue to help us all during this time.

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On the school site we are ready to restart our refurbishment work just as soon as it is safe to do so: the English block, the Geography and English toilets, the Science block windows, the Science laboratories in the Sixth Form college building and the replacement of teaching screens in classrooms across the school. We are also already planning the practicalities required to keep staff and students safe when we do return and are very much looking forward to seeing your children back in school just as soon as it is safe for us all.

I have been inspired by the motivations of our students at this time to help others, try something new and extend kindness through remote communications and actions. It is such thoughtful actions that strengthens our sense of belonging, community and trust and it is this that will get us through this time whilst we are apart from friends, family and school.

We eagerly await the safe, controlled and gradual return to school as the Government relax the lockdown criteria and issue greater detail regarding the safety measures required in order to look after our students both on the way to and in school.

In the meantime please stay safe, pass on my best wishes to your children and keep in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S Paley".

Mrs S Paley
Head of School

Enc

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:
How am I able to access the Assembly delivered by Mr Garner which referred to using TEAMS and saving work to the One Drive?
Response
For ease of access, Mr Garner's assembly can be viewed via the link below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhyg8Kfqw6M&feature=youtu.be
Question:
Who do I contact at School if I have any school work concerns?
Response
If you have any day to day concerns regarding school work, please contact your child's tutor or teachers.
Question:
Who do I contact at School if I have any safeguarding concerns?
Response:
If you have any safeguarding or mental health concerns regarding a child, please email the Head of Year directly or use the form on the school website which can be accessed via the link below: https://www.toothillschool.co.uk/page.php?p=pupil You can also email the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Gray directly on igray@toothillschool.co.uk
Question
Why is it not possible to have live streamed classes?
Response
We are unable to live stream lessons due to the complex factors surrounding and ensuring the safeguarding of both pupils and staff. Live streaming can also be difficult for some families who are not able to log on at the specified time or may not have multiple devices for their children to share.
Question
Why is not possible to receive recorded lessons?
Response
Please appreciate that our teaching staff are not simply 'working from home' but are also doing all they can, at home, in these challenging circumstances. Many teachers will also have families or children that they are trying to support in addition to which most staff will not have access to the necessary equipment to be able to film lessons from home.

Question:
Is it possible to increase communication to ensure my child continues to feel connected?
Response
<p>The importance of maintaining regular contact with pupils is paramount but as per the above, due to staff working from home under the current circumstances, making multiple daily calls in addition to trying to set and mark work to a high standard is quite challenging!</p> <p>Tutors email children weekly and there is also a Tutor TEAMS channel where pupils can join in with tasks, challenges and share news with their tutor.</p> <p>We would positively encourage you to email news and pictures through to them, especially any weekly attempts at the Toot Hill Challenge.</p> <p>Heads of Year narrate weekly assemblies which are communicated to pupils via TEAMS and their email. Please do watch these assemblies with your child/children and encourage them to feedback to their Head of Year.</p>
Question
In what ways are pupils receiving feedback and recognition?
Response
As well as checking key pieces of work 'turned in' by their students, teachers will be making sure that there are dedicated opportunities in lessons for children to focus on reflecting on feedback given and on using their Purple Pen to improve and develop their work. Children may be shown examples of high quality work, as they would in class, and be able to use these to guide their own improvement. Where students are unsure and do not know what they need to do next, they can contact their teacher directly.
Question
How is /are my child(ren) being recognised for how hard they are working?
Response
Due to the recent introduction of a new School Information Management System, the process of uploading credits has not yet been implemented. However, in the interim we will be emailing and using the TEAMS messaging system to praise and give positive feedback to students. Heads of Year will also be doing weekly 'shout outs' to any pupils highlighted for exceptional work by teachers, in their weekly assemblies.
Question
How do I contact members of staff?
Response
<p>Your child can contact their tutor or any of their teachers via their school email account. Please type in their teacher's surname in the search bar whereupon the member of staff can be located.</p> <p>You can also email the school office or use the list of email contacts. school.office@toothillschool.co.uk</p>

Question
Who do I contact if my child has SEN and is experiencing difficulty in accessing work?
Response
Please contact your child's tutor or the Learning Support department for further guidance and support. Direct email addresses below: Assistant SENDco, Mr L Collen lcollen@toothillschool.co.uk SENDCo, Mrs R Brentley rbrentley@toothillschool.co.uk

Question
How does my child change their (college) options or bridging group?
Response
Please contact the college team who will be able to advise. Direct email addresses below: Mr A Elliott aelliott@toothillschool.co.uk Head of College, Miss P Coates pcoates@toothillschool.co.uk