

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-1412WSL

Monday 14th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We're coming to the end of this year that none of us will ever forget, sadly for all the wrong reasons! I love teaching because it's a rollercoaster ride. I came late into the profession, working first in offices for the NHS, Ministry of Defence and Hull City Council. In every one of those jobs I felt I was on the big wheel, just going round and round, seeing the same faces, completing the same tasks in an endless cycle of boredom. Since I've been a teacher it's been a very different ride, a mixture of highs and lows, at the same time both terrifying and exhilarating. Since the pandemic began, this rollercoaster has certainly stepped up another level, it's now in the dark, going backwards, with endless corkscrews and dips that have left us all battered, bruised and not knowing whether we are coming and going.

I still love every minute of this job and couldn't be prouder that this ride is taking place with everybody at Baysgarth. I have the most brilliant team of staff and the most wonderful group of students that I spend my days with. On Friday I was moved to tears by some of the Y11 Drama students as they performed out of their skins for their exam performances. On Thursday I was proud to judge some amazing pieces of writing from our Y7/8/9 students who had entered our Twist on a Tale writing competition - the level of talent in our school is just fantastic!

As you know from last week's letter, we are now finishing on Thursday this week and will return for all students on **Monday 4th January** as planned. We had a number of Year 7 students self-isolating following a positive test. These were all due back on Friday 18th December but now the government has reduced the self-isolation period from 14 days to 10 days they should all be back in school, providing they are not displaying symptoms.

We are all looking forward to Christmas and hoping that on Wednesday we get downgraded to Tier 2 and have slightly more freedom over the festive period. If any student develops Covid-19 symptoms after the end of term and tests positive on or before the 23rd December, the school must be informed so we can complete our track and trace protocols. You can email me directly or my Deputy, Miss Driscoll – contact information can be found [here](#). This will be a nervous time for us all as there is always a risk students or staff might have to self-isolate over Christmas following a positive test result in our community.

Year 11

This has been a busy time for our Year 11 students. As well as the Drama exam I mentioned above, students are preparing for their Art exam with two days off timetable to focus on their Art later this week. This is following today's PPE (Mock exam) results day where they nervously opened envelopes to find out how they did in their recent exams. They have all been applying for colleges and researching apprentices and the first deadline for their futures is 15th January, as this is the day when Wyke College will stop guaranteeing places for September - all students must have their applications in by this date.



We received more updates from the government last week about the exams that Year 11 will sit next summer. With this letter I have attached a letter the Department for

Education has written for our students and a Q&A document they have produced to support parents. In summary the changes the government have made include:

- more generous grading than usual, in line with 2020
- students receiving advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A-levels, to help them focus their revision
- exam aids – like formula sheets – provided in some exams to give students more confidence and reduce the amount of information they need to memorise
- contingency exams – held shortly after the main exam series – so students can sit a paper if they miss all their assessments in a subject because of illness or self-isolation.

The new measures complement the existing changes for next summer which include:

- reduced content in many subjects
- a delay to the start of exams and changes to the timetable.

There will also be adaptations to vocational and technical qualifications to make sure there's parity with general qualifications. These are positive steps for our students but they know that only continued hard work and positivity will see them through their exams next summer so the message is to keep giving your best every day from now until the 5th July and then fingers crossed for results day which will be Friday 27th August next summer. You can read the government's press release [here](#).

And whilst we're on the subject of exam success, we wish one of our ex-students, Amy Shaw, success with her application to study Chemistry at Oxford University. Amy, who is studying her A Levels at Wyke College, had her interview at Oxford last Monday, and will hear whether she has been successful on the 25th January. Good luck!

Support for our Community - Fundraising

This week, we are hosting some brilliant events in support of Roux's Army. Roux, nephew to Miss Marshall, one of our Learning Managers, was diagnosed with a rare brain tumour just after birth; one specialist around the world had not encountered. After eight operations and over 50 hours of surgery, light is at the end of the tunnel. Over the past year, the Owen family have raised over £29,000 for Ward 52 at Leeds General Infirmary and we would like to help their already phenomenal achievements. We are holding a Covid-Safe Cake Sale on Wednesday during break and students can still enter the Virtual Bake Off competition before 16th December. More information can be found in this week's [Tutor PPT](#). 100% of the proceeds from the cake sale and all suggested entry fees from the bake off will be donated to Roux's Army. [Find out more and donate here](#).

We will also be raising money on Thursday with our Christmas Jumper Day. We recommend students bring £1 for their donation for non-uniform day and this money will be equally distributed between global charity, [Save the Children](#), and local organisation, [Baby Dinosaurs](#).

Support for our Community - Literacy

Our school is taking part in BookTrust's Bookbuzz programme, which aims to get children reading. As a result, every child in Year 7 and Year 8 will receive a free book this Christmas. They could pick from a range of seventeen choices and the books arrived in school last week. They will be distributed via your child's English teacher this week.

We have also been collecting books from our staff and students to support the younger readers in our community. On Friday of last week, we donated over 250 books to one of our partner primary schools, Castledyke, so that all of their pupils could have a new reading book for Christmas. Thank you to everyone in our community who kindly donated a book.

I mentioned the Twist on a Tale competition earlier that was judged by myself, Miss Driscoll and one of our governors, Mrs Jarrett. Congratulations to our top placed young writers:

- 1st Place Hayden Money
- 2nd Place Hollie Birch
- 3rd Place Emily Douthwaite

Hayden's evocative story was about a family plunged into poverty by unemployment caused by Covid-19 and how the local food bank had literally saved them from starvation - an inspiring read!

Support for our Community - Vulnerable Families

Thanks to the campaigning work of Marcus Rashford and the support offered by our Local Authority, we are able to distribute £30 over the Christmas period for all of our vulnerable families. Vouchers will be distributed via our students or can be picked up from the main office for all those families who have been informed they are eligible.

Baysgarth usually distributes our own Christmas hampers to vulnerable people and families in our community at Christmas. Sadly, we cannot do this at the moment due to Covid-19 restrictions, but we have teamed up to support the local Food Bank and Salvation Army, and have made donations to these organisations so that no family in our community need go hungry this Christmas time.

Support for our Community - Mental Health and Wellbeing



As the festive season approaches, we would like to highlight the ongoing support services that will be available over the holidays. Kooth, an online mental wellbeing community, will continue to provide free, safe and anonymous support to children and young people aged from 11 to 25 years throughout the Christmas break. The 24/7 provision will be available after the school closes and can be accessed from any device connected to the internet. Please visit the [Kooth website](#) for more information.

Shout 85258 are also offering round the clock free, for all ages, text support for anyone struggling to cope and who may be experiencing depression, anxiety, abuse, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, relationship problems and bullying. [Find out more here.](#)

Of course, one really good way to help with mental health is to get out and do some exercise and we are glad to be able to support this through our lettings programme. Baysgarth lettings are now once again fully open so if you want to use our facilities and book a session for a local sports, dance or fitness class then please get in touch.

Support for our Community - Environment

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago about our tree-planting exploits on our school grounds. The Local Authority have released an official press release on this now which is well worth a read and can be found [here](#).

Staffing

Last week, we welcomed two new staff to our community - Miss Stuart as our Employability Mentor and Miss Smith as our Duty Patrol Officer. This week we hope to appoint a new Learning Supervisor. On Thursday we will also say goodbye to Margaret Wilson, a member of our kitchen staff, who has decided that at 72 it's time to retire and relax. Margaret has served the community of Baysgarth for over 30 years in this role and will be sadly missed when she leaves on this week. Margaret, we wish you a long and happy retirement!

Mrs Gill, Learning Supervisor, also leaves Baysgarth at the end of this term. We would like to thank Mrs Gill for her unwavering hard work and commitment during her time at the school and wish her the very best of luck in her new job!

Chromebook Leasing

Thank you to the 100 families who responded to our survey about Chromebook leasing. The majority of these families are interested in this scheme and we are now finalising the details before we launch in January. Our vision of every family in our community having a laptop or Chromebook and access to the internet so there are no barriers to working remotely for any of our students is taking another step closer.

House Cup

With a third of the year now completed, the race for the House Cup is hotting up. This is an especially poignant year for this competition as the winner this year will be the last ever winner for the current House names. At this stage of the year Treece are leading from Ancholme, Bardney and Newton but everything is yet to play for. Thanks to all of our students for their efforts in winning points for their House.

Fifth House Update

As you will have heard from Mr McNaught, our community has already made two significant decisions in the move to five Houses from September. Firstly, by 53% to 42%, we decided to move to five brand new House names, and secondly, we decided that the new house will be represented by the colour purple. The third big decision is what to name our five new Houses and this time not only is the community in the driving seat but there is a huge prize for the winning choice. The Imaginarium restaurant in Barton has kindly donated a £100 meal voucher for whoever comes up with the best suggestion for names for our new Houses. All can be involved, so get your thinking caps on and come up with a set of inspiring names that our students will be proud to be associated with for generations to come. Entries must be submitted using the [online form](#) by 10th January!

And Finally...

The New Year is a time to look forward and be hopeful. Our Year 8 students will be looking forward to choosing their Option subjects and our Year 9 students, who have now completed their Gateway projects, will be looking forward to starting their GCSE courses.

Our Governing Body will also be looking forward to welcoming a new member and going from strength to strength. Following the ballot vote which closed on Friday 11th December, we are proud to welcome Andrew Hall to the school's Governing Body and look forward to him representing our parents and carers when governors meet again in 2021. Many thanks to all of you who voted, but most of all to the two candidates who stood for the one position. We greatly value the support our parents can offer and look forward to Mr Hall joining our Governing Body.

Thank you once again for the support you have given the school throughout 2020. I hope you have a happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you all again in 2021.

Take care and Merry Christmas from everyone at Baysgarth.

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs
Head Teacher