

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-0212WSL

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We have finally reached December in a year I'm sure most of us will look back upon and want to forget. Cycling through Barton on my way to and from work, I see so many Christmas decorations and lights up already, as we try to make ourselves feel better during this most difficult of years.

We have all been tested to our limits and the Resilience that we talk about as one of our core values has never been a more important quality than now. But through it all, I have been touched by the kindness and generosity of our community, the spirit that our staff and students have shown, and the positivity in our school. Never a day goes by when I don't laugh out loud at something in school; our children are warm and funny and have helped sustain us when, as staff, we feel worn out and anxious.

One of my jobs has been to make sure that we come out of this crisis stronger than when we entered it. Working in a school, this means looking at our systems and seeing if we can use the opportunities offered by the improvements in technology and our staff knowledge of technologies, to create a better school. We have already made significant improvements in our home school communication and since October. My staff have made contact with you as parents nearly 2,000 times through phone calls, emails and postcards home, with 70% of these contacts giving praise for the work completed in school or at home.

I can see a future where we never have another Parents' Evening again, with all contacts being made by video call, ending the queues and anxiety about missing slots or running behind that we all feel at these events.

To create this digital world of blended learning, we need to make sure that all of our families have internet access and all of our students have a device on which they can complete their remote learning. To this end, we are looking at starting a Chromebook leasing scheme in the new year. Families will be able to lease a Chromebook which will come preloaded with all the software they will need for school, be fully insured, and be set up on the school systems so students can use the device at home and also bring it into school and work with it during lessons.

The cost will be cheaper than any available online and can be paid off over one, two or three years, interest free, to suit family budgets, with you owning the Chromebook after the lease period has finished. Subsidies will be available for families who are in receipt of Free School Meals so that every one of our families can benefit from this scheme. We'll send more details out in the next few weeks with the scheme opening in January. We'd like some idea of the numbers who may be interested in this scheme so we can work with the charity who runs this and our IT partner Primary Tec to secure enough supplies of the Chromebooks. Please can you take one minute out of your busy schedules to complete this simple online form to help us gauge interest in the scheme [by clicking here](#) .

Speaking of Free School Meals, we want to make sure that all of our families who are eligible access this benefit. Many families may be falling into poverty for the first time as firms close and unemployment and furlough hit. If your circumstances have changed and you want to check if you can claim this benefit for your family, [click here](#) to find out more.

Usually, at the end of the Christmas term, our staff and students would go out delivering food parcels to some of our most vulnerable families to support them through the Christmas period. Sadly, this isn't possible during the pandemic but we are working closely with the local food banks on how we can make sure that none of our families go hungry this Christmas.

North Lincolnshire Council is also offering support to our most vulnerable families by once again providing supermarket vouchers for families eligible for Free School Meals. These £30 vouchers will be distributed via the school in the final week of term and we will contact families to let them know when the voucher will be sent home with their child.

Vodafone has given away free SIM cards in the last fortnight and Baysgarth has successfully applied for 50 of these cards. They provide three months of free data (not calls or texts) for vulnerable students who currently have no access to the internet. If you think your child would benefit, please contact the school via [head.baysgarth@baysgarthschool.co.uk](mailto:head.baysgarth@baysgarthschool.co.uk) or on 01652 632576.

We are also working closely with one of our local partner primary schools on an initiative to get every child reading. Baysgarth will be regifting books to as many primary students as possible, with the intention of creating a swap library when the pandemic is over so children can continue to enjoy the love of books. If any families have any books suitable for children aged 4-7 in the first instance and wish to donate them as part of this project, please send them into school with your child. If they take them to Student Support, they will be gratefully received. We are aiming to distribute the books to the primary school in the last week of term.

This week is National Tree Week and to celebrate, in addition to the planting of the 3,000 trees on site over the last few weeks, Mrs Burrows has the following notice:

“As it's National Tree Week next week I wanted to organise something to mark the occasion and begin the Christmas spirit at Baysgarth. I had a chat with my form who came up with this idea. Each form would source a small Christmas tree for each form or form room and hold a competition whereby there would be a prize of a Christmas hamper for the form who had decorated their tree in the best way. The form could choose a theme and each student within that form would bring in a decoration - whether it be new, old or hand made. From next week, the students would begin by deciding on a theme and agreeing on who would bring in what decoration. If you can support by donating a tree or decorations, please send this in with your child - it will certainly get us all into the festive spirit this year!”

The Local Authority has made some changes to its rules on school transport and is now adding teeth to its insistence that face masks are worn on all school buses/taxis. From now on, students who do not keep their face mask on for the entire journey will have their bus passes confiscated. Every school bus is equipped with CCTV so it will be easy to spot regular offenders. Please again reiterate to your child the importance of wearing a face mask on the buses. This will not apply to those students who have a medical exemption from wearing a facemask.

Excitement has been building in school as the votes have been counted on one of the biggest decisions of the year; whether to keep our House names or to move to five brand new Houses in September. We have had nearly 1,000 votes from students, staff and parents, with every vote having an equal weighting. Mr McNaught will be announcing the results within the next week, so make sure you keep an eye on your emails and our social media pages for the results and next steps.

Voting in the Parent Governor election closes on **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December**, so if you haven't voted yet, make sure that you do so using the [online voting form](#) before next Friday. We'll announce the result before Christmas.

We're now into our fifth year in our new buildings and looking forward to the next building phase to create a brand-new teaching block next year. We've been working hard in the background to finalise our plans in conjunction with the Local Authority. I'm very grateful for the work one of our ex-students Jack Drury has done in creating an amazing video which shows Baysgarth as it was then and is now. This can be viewed on social media channels and is fascinating for those of you who remember the old school. Thank you, Jack!

There has been a real buzz around the school this week as our students have been taking part in the annual cross-country races, trying to improve their personal best and to score points for their Houses. Well done to Mr Browne who ran alongside the Year 9 students on Monday afternoon; the culmination of his 5km a day challenge in November which has raised nearly £2,000 for Diabetes UK. Anyone wishing to donate still, can do so [here](#).

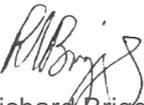
Over the next few days we will be posting an advert for a Learning Supervisor, so if you or someone you know are looking for a new challenge and want to join a fantastic team and work in a wonderful community of staff and students, please keep your eyes peeled for details of this post.

And finally, more really positive feedback from our parents that helps keep us going through these last weeks until Christmas. One parent has commented this week:

"I just wanted to say we are really pleased with his report...seems Covid hasn't and isn't stopping teaching and learning and we are grateful for that. We think the school has and is doing a fantastic job in these really difficult times. Keeping yourselves as well as hundreds of pupils as safe as you can is no mean feat and certainly a challenge. The communication is fantastic and personally as parents it's appreciated."

Take care and thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs  
Head Teacher