

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-1501WSL

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As we come to the end of the second week of the term, despite the huge challenges, it is heartening to see signs of better times to come with the vaccination programme starting to gain momentum. We know that, thanks to the efforts of the local doctors, all residents in the local care homes have now received their first vaccinations, as well as those most vulnerable groups in the community.

We also have lots to be positive about in school. I would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to email us positive messages of support and thanks; these are truly appreciated in these difficult times.

It has also been uplifting to be involved in the assemblies and live lessons this week and see so many students dedicated and motivated to learn. Engagement from students has increased significantly from last lockdown and I am proud to see so many examples of high quality work being produced by our students, making me confident about the future.

### **Students in School**

You will have no doubt seen the Government reiterate the advice regarding children of critical workers last weekend. Nationally, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students attending schools compared to the first lockdown. This week at Baysgarth, we have been averaging 110 students in school per day, which is putting students into groups in excess of 25 students in some years.

As you know, the enforcement of social distancing at all times is not possible in schools, and therefore, as staff, we have concerns about the potential issues these numbers could present. We remain committed to supporting our critical worker parents and we will accommodate where we can, but we urge you to consider if your child can work safely at home. If they can, they should remain at home. We must consider safety first and avoid placing children into school unless it is strictly necessary, as this raises the risks of infection transmission for our community.

### **Testing Update**

Our plan for the introduction of mass Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing at Baysgarth was to use this week to train staff, test out our systems and then begin testing, starting with staff on Friday and the students that are in school next week.

Unfortunately, on Tuesday evening, we received notification of a positive test for a member of our community who had been in school on Monday. This meant we had to close two of our student bubbles and send a number of staff and students home to self-isolate.

We then moved our plans forward so that we were able to start the LFD tests on Wednesday. We tested staff first and when this was completed successfully, we invited students back in on Thursday and were able to test them as well.

It is fantastic to see that through this LFD testing process, we no longer have to send home large numbers of staff and students to self-isolate for 10 days. We can test in school and all those tested are notified of their results within an hour, meaning students are not missing out on their learning. We know that a negative test result does not make the school safe and we continue to strictly enforce all of our infection control measures for all staff and students who are on site.

This bodes well for the school being able to return to some form of normality once the current lockdown ends. Thank you to our staff who have risen to this challenge and to our community volunteers who are supporting us with our testing programme.

## Remote Learning

The start of my week involved a number of parental emails. It is pleasing to see parents engaging and being positive and constructive with their feedback. It is appreciated and always shared with staff. Within the communication this week, I have received emails stating we are setting too much work and some who think we are not setting enough. As you can appreciate, with such a wide range of students working remotely, it is difficult to ensure that this is perfect for every student. Our advice as always, is for parents to judge when their child has worked for the required time and then if the work has been completed too quickly or it has taken too long, feeding back to the class teachers. This feedback is so important to us being able to refine our remote teaching and ensure we meet your child's needs.

The Government this week has published new guidance in relation to remote learning. They are clear that remote learning is not optional for students or parents and that schools should be conducting regular checks to ensure full engagement. They also state that secondary students should be engaged in remote learning for five hours per day.

At Baysgarth, we understand the importance of wellbeing and balance, and as such, the school's approach allows students to engage in physical activity, reading and wellbeing activities daily as part of their programme. We have summarised our remote learning approach and published this on our [website](#), which outlines the expectations of study hours per subject for your child every week.

<p><b>Secondary school-aged students not working towards formal qualifications this year</b></p>	<p>In Year 7 and 8, students should aim to complete <b>three</b> hours per day of subject specific work (English, Maths, Science, MFL, History, Geography RE and Flipped Learning). In addition, they should complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minutes of reading per day or listening to the school audio books</li> <li>• One hour of physical activity per day</li> <li>• 30 minutes of wellbeing activities following the wellbeing programme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Secondary school-aged students working towards formal qualifications this year</b></p>	<p>In Years 9, 10 and 11, students should aim to complete <b>four</b> hours per day of English, Maths, Science and their Option subjects. In addition, they should complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minutes of wellbeing activities following the wellbeing programme</li> <li>• 30 minutes of physical activity per day</li> </ul>

The launch of live lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11 has been immensely successful, with a significant increase in student engagement from the last lockdown. Staff have really valued the interactions they have had with the students and it's been a pleasure to see some of the high quality work being produced. We have looked at how we can extend this offer to KS4 Option subjects, but have decided at this time to remain with the model we have so we can look at enhancing provision for our Year 7 and 8 students over the coming weeks.

The Government's expectation is that schools are checking daily to ensure every student has logged on and is working. This means the expectations are that all work set over the week is completed, so that students do not fall behind their peers. This is critical now, as we are following the normal curriculum, which is new content. This is the rationale for the Friday deadline for work submission and it also allows parents to get a weekly update on how their child is doing from Google Classroom. This will allow parents to have focused discussions with their child about any work that is outstanding. Any parent who has not yet signed up to receive the weekly communications can do so by contacting the school.

## Wellbeing

We take our responsibility for the wellbeing of staff and students seriously and we know that during this difficult period, this must be a focus for us as a community; ensuring we show care and support to each other.

At Baysgarth, we strongly believe that extra time at a computer screen would not be beneficial for our students and we would prefer to encourage additional learning to support wellbeing and promote positive mental health. We believe that it is important that students engage in other enriching activities that will encourage them to connect with others, stay active, learn new skills, explore new topics and be creative. As such, Miss Burrows has sent a Google Classroom code to all students so they can access the weekly activities as part of their programme. Miss Burrows will be monitoring this and rewarding students, so please encourage your child to get involved.

House assemblies will resume from next week. These will be released as a video and students should watch out for communication from their Heads of House early next week.

In addition, we are hosting online support sessions with Learning Managers for those students who need additional emotional support at this time. If any student feels they would benefit from this, they should contact their Learning Manager to make an appointment.

## Physical Activity

As you will no doubt be aware, there have been numerous reports in the media regarding the damage that another lockdown will cause to the activity rates of children across the country. At Baysgarth, we share this concern and believe that physical activity should be part of every student's daily routine and will form part of their expected study hours.

Mr O'Mara has been working with a group of passionate local club leaders, sports activators and local club officials in identifying what we can do, as a community, to give our children the best possible chance of remaining active.

[Elsham Golf Club](#), [Brigg Martial Arts Club](#), [Barton Junior Girls FC](#), [Brigg Town FC](#) and [Barton and District Athletics Club](#) have all committed to providing a weekly activity or challenge for children to attempt at home.

The proposed start of the initiative will be **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January**, a date already known as 'Blue Monday' due to it being a time of year when people are often feeling low (even before lockdown), so it is our hope that we can give everyone a much needed boost.

[You can find more information, including details of the weekly activities here.](#)

Each week, there will be a new 'menu' of activities from each of the participating clubs for your child to choose from. On completion of their activity, students can log what they've done through the site in order to build up rewards. Students will be rewarded with gold, silver and bronze certificates, spot prizes and hopefully medals, to reward their continued participation and willingness to try new activities.

## Reading

The benefits of reading are huge for students, not just academically but also for positive wellbeing. This year, we have committed to promoting reading through tutor time, taking the time to read for pleasure as a school.

Reading is a key aspect of the Expert Learner Framework and we expect students, as part of Flipped Learning, to be reading for pleasure outside of school in addition to the 30 minutes daily for Year 7 and 8 currently. To support this, in December, all Year 7 and 8 students should have received a free book from the school, as part of [Book Trust's BookBuzz](#) campaign. The students who did not get their book will be contacted next week to arrange collection.

We understand it is difficult at this time to be able to access a range of books which might suit your child to fulfill our expectations, given the national restrictions in place. Therefore, to support families, all libraries in the Local Authority will allow you to register online and then be able to access their e-catalogue, so there should be a book to suit everyone.

[You can find out more and sign up for the online library here.](#)

## Chromebook Leasing Scheme

The company we are working with to provide the Chromebooks are putting the final touches to the dedicated website that parents will use to find out more information and then order Chromebooks, as part of the leasing scheme. We have secured a stock of 90 Chromebooks, which has been quite an achievement as they are in short supply across the country at the moment. They will be offered out initially to those families who expressed an interest before Christmas and then to our vulnerable and disadvantaged families who will benefit from a subsidy from the school to make sure this technology is affordable. If there are any left at the end of this process, we will open the scheme to the rest of our community. There will then be a second round of leasing in the Summer Term for those who miss out this time, along with current Year 6 students, so they can be fully equipped by the time they join us at the beginning of Year 7.

## Free School Meals Arrangements

As you may have seen, on Wednesday the Government announced the national FSM voucher scheme, facilitated by EdenRed, would reopen from 18<sup>th</sup> January. This will run for four weeks, until Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Following the disrupted start of the previous scheme, EdenRed will roll this out to schools gradually next week, which means that we may not have access until next Thursday or Friday. However, to make the process as quick and easy as possible, we are asking eligible families to complete a brief survey to indicate whether they would like to continue collecting food parcels from the school or receive online vouchers, and if the latter, from which store. Please note, if your child is attending school and in receipt of lunch, you will not be entitled to vouchers or food parcels. [Please click here](#) to submit your response by **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January**. We will be in touch next week to confirm further details.

Today, there has been much controversy in the media about the national decision to not fund FSM through the half term break. I'm pleased to be able to confirm that North Lincolnshire Local Authority has committed to provide vouchers to all eligible families over half term and these will be distributed before the half term break.

## IT Survey

We also have an exciting opportunity to gain some free computer design software for students to benefit from in school and at home. To take full advantage of this, students will need access to Windows software, therefore, we are asking parents to complete a short survey to indicate the potential uptake for this. [Please click here to submit your response.](#)

## Increasing Data Allowances on Mobile Devices

The Department for Education has launched a scheme, which temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users to minimise disruption to children's education. This will help students access their online learning more easily, for example by setting up a 'WiFi hotspot'.

As a school, we can request mobile data increases for students who meet all three of the following criteria:

- do not have fixed broadband at home
- cannot afford additional data for their devices
- are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education

At the moment, the following providers are offering an increased data allowance: EE, O2, Sky Mobile, SMARTY, Tesco Mobile, Three, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone. Other providers may join the scheme at a later stage:

If you think you are eligible and would like us to apply for a data allowance increase on your behalf, [please complete a form here](#).

## How to Set Up a Wi-Fi Hotspot on your Smartphone

Almost all smartphones with a data allowance can be turned into a 'WiFi hotspot', which allows you to connect other devices, such as laptops and tablets, to the internet. This enables your child to access their home learning on a suitable device without the need for a broadband connection. To set up a WiFi hotspot on your smartphone, follow the steps in the guides below. You can also do this if you don't want us to request extra data for you, as long as you have a data allowance on your smartphone:

- [Click here to find out how to set up a WiFi hotspot on an iPhone or iPad](#)
- [Click here to find out how to set up a WiFi hotspot on Android](#)

If you have a different smartphone, please contact Mrs Lawson for advice.

## Parental Survey

Thank you to the many parents who have told us that after last week's letter mentioning Ofsted, they went onto the Ofsted email and gave Baysgarth positive reviews! Ofsted may complete a monitoring visit on us this year, so we thought this was a good time to gather feedback from you as parents and carers. We've taken the questions that Ofsted ask parents when they visit a school and put them into a two-minute survey for you to complete. Obviously, you have to answer the questions from the perspective of when the school is open as usual rather than the current circumstances, otherwise we'd have nobody saying they make use of our extracurricular activities! If you can spare the time to complete this survey and give us some feedback, we would be really grateful; [click here to complete the survey](#).

As always, there is a lot of information above, as we try to ensure that you as parents are fully updated at a time of constant change. If you do have any queries or questions, please ensure you contact the school and we will be more than happy to help in any way we can.

Take care and once again, thank you for your continued support!

Yours faithfully



Miss J Driscoll  
Deputy Head Teacher