

Parental Communication & Engagement



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Message from Head Teacher

I hope you all had a good bank holiday weekend and enjoyed whatever activities you got involved in to honour all of our brave men and women who have fought for this country. There was certainly lots of community spirit up and down the country and I hope you managed to stay safe and protect yourself as well as relax and enjoy one of the many street parties and other activities that took place all over the country.

It seems important that we mark and honour the end of one titanic struggle 75 years ago whilst we struggle with another. If our grandparents and great grandparents were able to endure six years of ruin, death, uncertainty, hunger, existential threat and genocide, then can we overcome coronavirus. My own grandmother use to tell me that the community spirit was amazing during the war, the sense of purpose palpable, the nation united, and the friendships unshakeable. Long may the current community spirit last!

I am sure you will all have seen Boris Johnson's speech on Sunday night. It seems that we will not be seeing many of our students for some time. We miss them all in school and although it has now been a while since lockdown began please be assured that our students, and indeed the wider school community, are always in our minds. Teachers are missing the face to face contact with students as teaching from a distance can be very difficult and frustrating. We miss the interaction with students when we are able to monitor, assess and intervene when students need us. As we will not have any face to face contact with many students for some time we are currently reviewing the ways in which we set work for students. We will write to all parents in the next week giving a further idea about how home learning might be carried out. We are hoping to introduce some on-line learning so that students can log in to virtual lessons. We will provide more details about this soon.

Year 10 will be the first students invited back in to school for some face to face contact with teachers. It is very likely that this will not take place before the end of June and as I want to make absolutely sure that before we open it is completely safe for students and staff. We are currently carrying out full risk assessments and I am carefully planning with my senior management team to ensure that the day to day running is as effective and safe as possible. As I have said to students in this week's blog, the school will look and feel very different when they do return with many procedures and systems temporarily changed. Before we do give any return dates we will issue very clear guidelines to students and parents explaining how things will operate so that everyone has a chance to get ready for the changes. I realise that it is very difficult juggling a family, your own work and your child's home schooling so once again I would like to point out that students should only do what they can. As long as they all try their best we will be very happy. No student should worry about falling behind as we will go back to the place we left off at the beginning of lockdown. I must say a massive thank you to all parents and carers for your resilience, patience, and understanding during these difficult times. Please remember that you can contact your child's form tutor or Head of House if you have any worries about your children.

We also want to make sure that our students are as happy as they can be during the lockdown and we have introduced challenges and competitions to keep students amused and upbeat. Please try to encourage them to get involved. I have received some great entries to our competition to design the front cover of our new student planner. We usually use a photograph taken from our publicity shots however I thought it would be nice this year to prove how talented our students are. If your child has not entered their work please persuade them to pick up their pencils and pens and get creative and then send it in to us. Please also remember to nominate your child for one of our core value stripes if you think they've coped well during these unusual times.

Finally, it was National Nurses Day on Tuesday and I would like to say thank you to all of our NHS staff who are doing such a brilliant job on the front line battling the virus. I know that many of our parents and carers are key workers and your hard work is much appreciated.

Have a good week and stay healthy and happy.



Head Teacher

Emails/Letters Sent Out Recently

ALL letters are now emailed home, hard copies are ONLY provided for 'Reply Slip' Letters. *Selected student only letters are given out to your child by hand or are posted directly home. The criterion for 'selected student only' opportunities are based on various factors depending on the trip and its focus. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow every student the opportunity to be involved with every activity which we understand sometimes causes disappointment. If you require more details about the selection process for any opportunity please contact the event organiser.

- HoH Keeping in Touch Email to Students (includes Weekly PowerPoint) - Monday 11 May 2020;
- Year 10 Careers Update Letter & Aspire to HE Newsletters - Monday 4 May 2020;
- Year 7 - 10 Curriculum Briefing - Thursday 7 May 2020;
- Year 10 Update Letter - Wednesday 13 May 2020;
- Year 7 - 10 Careers Bulletin - Wednesday 13 May 2020;
- Head Teacher's Weekly Blog - Friday 8 May 2020 (on website only under Parents > Head Teacher's Weekly Blog).

General Reminders/Updates

Don't forget to order your tickets for the Prom

As you know the Year 11 Prom has been rescheduled for Friday 9 October 2020. In the event that it is unable to go ahead due to social distancing still being in place we will look for a timely postponement. If this is not a viable option and the Prom is unable to proceed we will reimburse monies paid for tickets. The cost per ticket is £28.00. This covers the venue hire, buffet catering, a welcome drink on arrival, decorations, security and a DJ. An official photographer will also be present on the night to take formal pictures which students will be able to purchase at a cost of £6 each, payable directly to the photographer. Payment for the Prom can be made on-line using the ParentPay site. If you require activation information for your ParentPay account or wish to request a bar coded letter which can be taken along with your payment to a store displaying the PayPoint logo, please email churst@dormston.dudley.sch.uk. We will then ensure that the information is posted out to you. All payments need to be received by 12th June 2020 so they can be processed.

Year 9 Parents

If your child has opted to take GCSE Citizenship, please encourage them to subscribe to 'Mrs Downie Citizenship' on YouTube. They can begin watching videos to introduce them to the course and familiarise themselves with the learning, before they begin their studies next year. Thank you. Any queries, please email rdownie@dormston.dudley.sch.uk.