

KSH/jr
27 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope this letter finds you well, and you and your families are staying safe. This has certainly not been the start to 2021 that we had anticipated. I have been so impressed by how well students in Year 8 have coped as a year group going back to remote learning. It seems that this time round many more of them are cracking on with the work and more importantly, communicating with us when they are struggling. I have had multiple members of staff contact me with praise for the work the year group is producing and have had many examples of outstanding work sent to me.

Tutors have of course been in touch over the past few weeks and will continue to do so whilst we are in this remote learning period. Just a reminder that many members of staff are calling from their homes so the call will come through from a withheld or no caller ID number. Please do not wait for them to call if your child is struggling with something or needs some support, they are there to help at any point. Please feel free to contact them via email or your child can contact through Google classroom if you have any questions.

This is the same for subject teachers. Hopefully now students have virtually 'met' their new teachers. Please know that they are just a message away if students are struggling with the work. Sometimes staff are working with students that are in school, so will not always be able to respond straight away.

As you will know, the Pathways process has now begun and I have urged all students to watch the assembly and WINK videos that have been sent out to them. These are also available on the school website. These videos, alongside the booklet and Frequently Asked Questions sheet should answer most questions that you may have. Parent's Evening is coming up on Wednesday 10th February so it is very important that you speak with subject teachers. They will also be able to answer any questions you may have about the GCSE courses. I encourage you to keep an open mind and sit down with your child to discuss the subjects they may like to pursue at GCSE. It is also important to bear in mind that they have a good few weeks to make their decision, they do not need to panic or rush and there is a lot of support available to them to help make their choices.

Students may have seen on Google classroom the launch of a new 'Unlock your Potential' lockdown badge that is very similar to the attribute badges many of them have already collected. This is an exciting opportunity to set some pledges to work towards during this time. I have set myself the challenge of completing acts of kindness and achieving 150km a month in walks. I am currently on 122km for January so fingers crossed I can make it with a few days to go. I would love to hear what pledges or goals students have set for this time. I have found it has really boosted my motivation to have something to work towards, you may find it helps you too and is something that can be done by the whole family. As you know, exercise is also really important for our wellbeing. So do try to encourage your child to get out for some fresh air each day. If you are struggling with your wellbeing please remember there is a lot of support out there, including the wellbeing areas on the school website.

Well done to Year 8 for all of the hard work so far and remember that we will be back in school at some point so it is very important that the students are keeping up with all of their subjects. Even those that they are considering not continuing at GCSE.

I look forward to hearing about Year 8 pledges, as always if you need anything your child's tutor and myself are only an email away.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

Mrs K Heath
Director of Progress and Achievement - Year 8