

3rd April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 9 end of term letter

Thank you all for your support over the past the two weeks as we have adjusted to this new way of working. I do understand that it has not been easy for anyone, as many of us have had to manage working from home whilst simultaneously supporting our children's home learning. Despite two qualified teachers in my house, it has been a learning curve adjusting to our new 'home learning' system and my children were begging to go back to school after the first day! I know lots of you are key workers so a well-deserved big thank you for all of your hard work as well.

I have been really impressed with how Year 9 have adapted to this new way of working. Just think of the amazing skills of self-regulation and self-motivation that they are developing. These skills do not come easily so they are really ahead of the learning curve. I can't emphasise enough how useful this will be to them for their future GCSE and A level studies. Universities always complain that students come from schools too reliant on their teachers and wanting to be drip-fed information, so for Year 9 to be managing independent learning so well now is just fantastic!

Here are some top tips from me that will hopefully make working from home easier for Year 9.

1. Structure - I have noticed that some students have been completing their school work very late at night and then getting up really late in the mornings. Having a lie in is fine, but I would recommend they start work at 9am every morning. This way they can be done with schoolwork by lunchtime and have the rest of the day to relax.
2. Sleep - Students need to ensure they get a good night's sleep. This is so important for our mental health and wellbeing. A normal sleep wake cycle (regular bedtime and alarm in the morning will help with this). With all that is going on at the moment, it is very normal to have trouble getting to sleep. I've been getting my Alexa to play guided meditations when I go to sleep which I've found really helps.
3. Keep in touch with friends and family - I have been having more FaceTime conversations in the last week that ever before! Social interaction is key to our happiness but I think more skype / zoom / houseparty / FaceTime calls and less social media will help. Social media can at times be quite negative, especially at the moment. Students do not need to give it up but limiting their time on social media will be helpful.
4. Keeping busy - This is especially important during the Easter holidays, it would be easy to spend the entire holiday on Netflix and Disney+ but long term this is not healthy. Teachers are going to set some work that is optional to do. It should inspire awe and wonder and will be good to for Year 9 to complete if they find themselves getting bored. I've been reading lots and signed up to a free trial of Kindle unlimited so that I am well stocked with books. Audible have plenty of free books as well at the moment so it would be good for them to take advantage of that whilst they can. I have been baking lots of cakes this week, which whilst delicious and enjoyable is not good for the waistline so I plan to learn to bake bread as an alternative next week (I think I'm just replacing one problem with another though 😊).

Co-Headteachers Mrs Anne Kennedy and Mrs Katie Pearce

5. Keep active - I know the PE department have shared lots of activities with their students to try. One problem with being stuck at home is that we are just not getting as many steps in everyday as we normally would. On a normal school day, I can easily walk between 6000 – 10000 steps just around the school site. This is simply not happening at home so it makes regular exercise more important than ever. I am really missing regular swimming so I have decided to try a variety of other sports to see if I can fill that gap. Whilst the weather has been nice it has been lovely to go for a walk outside and it looks like the weather over Easter is going to be good this year.

I have to say that I am pleased that I have been so busy with work this past two weeks. Friends of mine who are unable to work are so bored already they are climbing the walls. I'm looking forward to the Easter holidays however, it will be nice to have a break from home schooling my children (you might feel sorry for them with two teachers for parents!) and I can concentrate on crossing some jobs off my 'to do' list around the house.

I wish you a restful Easter break and remind you that teachers will resume setting work online from 20th April. If you have any worries or concerns just send me an email.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Thomas
Head of Year 9