

7 May 2020



West Kirby Grammar School

Graham Road, West Kirby, Wirral CH48 5DP

T: 0151 632 3449 F: 0151 632 1224

Email: office@wkgs.net

www.wkgs.org

Dear Parents/ Carers,

A shorter school week draws to a close today. All of our students and staff will be at home tomorrow due to the Bank Holiday, as none of our key worker families have requested a place in school; consequently we are closed. We are encouraging everyone to step away from the computer and school work and to do something different.

Last week I said that we were evaluating our online learning and what we could improve, particularly relating to concerns about workload and students (and staff) working excessive hours. To improve this, from next week, we are introducing a Wellbeing Day once per week. On this day, **work will not be set by teachers**, and we are encouraging our school community to use this time to catch up on work if required, but also to engage in wellbeing activities. This day will rotate each week, starting with Monday next week (11 May) and then the week after it will be on Tuesday, then Wednesday etc.

We do not want any families to feel concerned that this will mean students will fall behind with courses as this is an unprecedented time and any gaps will be filled once schools return. Our students are continuing to make good academic progress even in these challenging circumstances and it is important that we can say the same about their mental health and wellbeing. If any students wish to research additional information, or to complete additional tasks on this day, they are of course free to do so!

We want to encourage our school community to use this day to be kind to themselves, to keep connected with friends and family, to take part in some physical activity or a hobby, to take notice of how they are feeling, or to just carry on doing some of the amazing things that we are hearing about. Students should engage with some of our school community events, or use some time to engage with their pastoral classroom. Alongside this letter today a Powerpoint and wellbeing booklet are on our website (Latest News/Letters and Presentations) which are useful to aid understanding about wellbeing.

Remember that if students are struggling they can email wellbeing@wkgs.net for advice. This email can also be used by parents/carers to contact us, or you may like to follow our wellbeing information on Twitter and Instagram.

For those students who will be in school on Monday, they will be able to access Google Classroom for wellbeing activities, or to catch up on work if required. However, they may prefer to bring a book or other source of entertainment to enable them to have some down time, and focus on their wellbeing. Students are free to bring headphones to listen to music or other audio through the computer, but we are discouraging the use of mobile phones in the school day. It is important that students come to school prepared with activities for the day, as those staff who are supervising will be catching up on what they need to also. Students in school should continue to attend in uniform.

We have been impressed at the number of students engaging in our House competitions and House Computing and House Drama (Year 8) have now ended with the results being posted on social media. Still running until the end of this week are House Song Writing and Photography competitions. House Poetry is running for a little longer yet, until 14 May. So get those entries in!

Online safety information is once again circulated with this letter, and this week is all about 'tech tips for safe home schooling.' Thanks to Mr Douthwaite for keeping us all updated with this important information. I am also posting a link below to a safeguarding hub that allows you to access interactive guidance on setting up parental controls on devices, as well as guidance on apps like Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram and more. Please click [here](#)

Finally a mention today to some of our community who are going above and beyond to support frontline workers. Mr Heibel, a member of our IT team has worked tirelessly to produce visors using his 3D printer, and this week we have been supporting Calday as they produce scrubs. A number of our students, staff and Governors have been sewing furiously including Mrs Duffey (chief sewer and sewing group organiser), Mrs Cambourne-Paynter, Miss Preedy, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Tolitt, Mrs Favager and Miss Jones' mum. In addition, Miss Stenhouse and Mrs Plowman have also been involved in cutting and sewing. Mrs Cliffe has been instrumental in much of this work, encouraging staff to get involved. See our social media feeds for more information and photographic evidence! On top of this, we know that some of our younger students have been producing face masks and getting involved in supporting key workers in so many different ways. Do keep sharing this information with us; it make us very, very proud.

Finally, today, as we end another week reflecting on how important our wellbeing is, we know that students are missing being in school with their friends and many of us are experiencing a whole roller coaster of emotions, perhaps rediscovering just how important the people in our lives are. Therefore, I am ending with an excerpt from Winnie the Pooh.

“Pooh!” he whispered

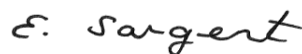
“Yes, Piglet?”

“Nothing,” said Piglet, taking Pooh’s paw.

“I just wanted to be sure of you.”

Please be reassured that we are here for our students and our whole community while we are apart, and we will be ready for when we come together again. Do please keep in touch.

Kind regards,



Elaine Sargent
Headteacher