



Bramcote College

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

3rd April 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Today marks two weeks since schools in England were told to close. So much has changed in this time and we are all still trying to figure out what this means for us as individuals, families and society.

António Guterres the UN Secretary-General said this week that “The current coronavirus outbreak is the biggest challenge for the world since World War Two.” We are all working hard to rise to this challenge. Our Bramcote College community includes parents and carers who are key workers, NHS staff, health and social care workers, educators, delivery drivers, food suppliers and shop workers, as well as home workers and people who are, no-doubt, worried about the future of their jobs or businesses, as well as carrying the responsibility of providing for and caring for their families. Our students, your children are also working hard to do their bit, by staying at home, balancing school work with living their young lives in this unusual situation and helping at home with chores, or younger siblings and keeping the community’s spirits’ up with things like the rainbow initiative and even other community activities. We are all doing our bit and I am certainly proud to be a member of our community.

Many of our staff are doing what you are all doing; balancing working from home, coping with the uncertainty of the present situation and trying to get their children to do some schoolwork. They are also trying to ensure that lock-down doesn’t equate to melt-down!

Home schooling is such a great challenge for everyone involved that I would like to offer some advice to parents and carers to make it more approachable. The challenges range from being able to focus on schoolwork in such strange circumstances, to setting the right work and interpreting what is needed to complete work, the partnership between school, children and parents has never been so important.

My first piece of advice is to do as much as your family is capable of that day; you know your children best and you know what you can manage between you. Some days schoolwork could fill a large amount of time without being too difficult, however, on other days you may make the decision that baking a cake or watching a film or just playing in the garden is more important for the wellbeing of your family.

My second suggestion is to create a routine for weekdays which you may choose to do using the timetables we have sent out as a guide. If you chunk learning into 25-30 minute blocks and decide on the day how many chunks your children can manage, the work will be easier to do; for younger students needing more help four or five 30 minute sessions could create a really good balance, with a bit more before lunch time than after, because that is when most children are more focussed.

Thirdly, it is fine to walk away from things that are difficult and come back to them when everyone feels up to the challenge. Our teachers are there to answer emails asking for advice; this also allows you to 'bench' something until the teacher has emailed back with guidance, rather than struggling with it. It is also important to remember that we all have our strengths and areas where we need some help, so some subjects may be easier than others.

Home schooling like this gives children a chance to get really involved in the things they're learning, so if something really sparks your children's imagination, then let them find out more about it and present it in a thoughtful way, even if it means you're not following all the instructions given in home schooling packs.

If you are a parent/carer of a Year 11 or 13 student, the news today will be including information about Ofqual's publication of guidelines for awarding GCSE and A Level grades. Here are links to the documents which are aimed at parents and students. Mrs l'Anson is sending an email to Year 11 and Mrs Parker Dennis is contacting Year 13s to explain what this means for them, so please encourage your children to check their school/college emails.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

Maya Angelou writes in one of her books, 'I've learned that people will forget what **you** said, people will forget what **you** did, but people will never forget how **you made them feel**.' Whilst we are doing all we can to provide education during this lock-down period, I think it is important that we recognise that every moment is a learning moment and our children need to feel secure. During this time, we must hope that our young people will become more resilient, more resourceful, better communicators and will have gained a new perspective on life and the value of human relationships.

We are now going into the Easter 2 week break for staff and students and while we continue to offer support for the children of key workers who are out at work and vulnerable students, for most, this is a chance to have a break from school and to catch up on some other activities, like reading, being creative and developing new and old skills, or helping in the garden as the weather improves. We will be setting new work again from Monday 20th April.

We remain committed to the families in our community. We will get through this by working together. Whilst our doors remain shut, we are still very much here for you and your family and are always happy to talk through any concerns.

With kindest regards,

Heidi Gale
Headteacher