

SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Robin M Bevan MA MEd PhD FRSA



April 3rd, 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for your sustained and considered support across the last two weeks. In the rapid transition from our normal school provision to a pattern of remote learning and limited on-site support, we have achieved a great deal, learned a lot and – with your help – will continue to make great strides forwards.

I am immensely grateful to all those staff members who have volunteered for our on-site supervision rota; and, equally, to those members of support staff who continue to work on all those vital functions that are essential to our continued provision.

Exam grades for GCSE, AS and A-level

OfQual has today published their recommendations for the process that will be used to determine GCSE, AS and A-level grades. Parents and pupils may wish to read the OfQual letter to students: [available here](#). The detailed advice requires careful reading and the school will develop an approach that is consistent and fair for all candidates: we will provide further written guidance, as necessary, after the Easter break. **Please do not contact the school, individual teachers or Year Leaders on this topic** – we are not in a position to be able to respond, at this time.

Remote learning

In the meantime, classroom colleagues have designed and uploaded more than 2000 online tasks. We know that some approaches to remote learning are working better than others; that some subjects and topics are more suited to remote learning; and there are both benefits and limitations of the various online tools. Your support for our efforts has been greatly valued and the feedback appreciated.

I have asked teachers to prioritise the design of engaging and effective learning activities. Some, but not all, tasks will be submitted by pupils for review or marking. It does however matter that all tasks are completed with genuine determination: this includes the learning that is directed towards those who will return, here, to school in the months ahead *and equally* for those who will be moving on to study elsewhere - *“The day you stop learning is the day you stop living ...”* (attributed to Albert Einstein amongst others).



The vast majority of our pupils are following a good daily routine, during the school week: logging-in to ShowMyHomework, at a sensible time, in the morning – completing the day’s tasks, usually by lunchtime, then enjoying physical activity and free-time. It is not surprising to see high levels of success and progress with those following this approach, and much less so with those – for example – accessing tasks in the evening or even later. We have set out to make the pattern and duration of tasks manageable and motivating. We would ask for your continued support in maintaining an appropriate daily ‘rhythm’ for school days.

Easter Holiday

In the same way, weekends and holidays should be different and feel different from term-time: even during ‘lockdown’! As the Easter holiday begins, teachers may be providing suggestions for the holiday and possibly at A-level some sustained or extended tasks – but we will not be providing the daily lesson activities. These will resume on Monday 20th April and pupils will be ready to re-engage and maintain their learning if they have had a fortnight’s break. Equally, the start of the holiday provides some time for any pupil to ‘catch up’ on learning if tasks have been missed due to ill-health.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin M. Bevan', with a small flourish at the end.

Robin M. Bevan
Headteacher

Financial Support (Guidance from Southend Local Authority)

Could your child and the school be missing out on vital additional funding during this already difficult time?

Due to the current climate and probability that some households may have unfortunately lost their income or be on a considerably reduced income, we thought it was a good time to check if your child may now qualify for pupil premium. If you are in receipt of any of the benefits listed you may be eligible to help with the cost of food for your child, while the school is closed through free school meal vouchers. The school would receive additional funding for your child to provide extra support and resources and help with the cost of food.

Are you currently receiving one of these benefits?

- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400.
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

If the answer is 'yes' and you do receive one of the benefits listed above, all you need to do is go to Southend Borough Council website to complete a short online form, which you can access [here](#), and we can perform a simple online check to see if you are eligible. All information is kept confidential at all times. In the event of difficulties accessing this system, please approach your child's school directly if you think you are eligible.

You will need the following information to complete the form:

- First and Last Name of parent(s) that child resides with.
- Date of Birth of parent(s) above.
- National Insurance Number of parent(s) as above.

Social distancing - advice to parents (adapted from public health documents):

Children/young people will pester you to go out and socialise with their friends, they are kids and will want to do what kids do in their normal daily lives. However, over the coming weeks you need to make sure that the only physical social contact they have is with immediate family.

We know this isn't going to be easy. It's really important that you think about your own stress levels as you address this with your children and choose a good time to talk it through with them when you are both feeling calm and rational.

It is likely that children of all ages will need to revisit the discussion time and time again as they try to understand the message. It's important that you recognise this is normal, it's the way they process information. Continue to connect with them, listen to their worries and concerns. These might at times seem small compared to other worries going on in your family, but are very important to them. If they have their worries acknowledged, (even if you can't fix them) and a young person feels heard, it will help them to move on and help them to understand what they need to do and why.

Messages for adolescent young people

Young people are often very tactile. Holding hands, giving each other piggy backs, lifting/picking each other up, hugging, kissing each other. Therefore getting into a routine of social distancing will be difficult for them. Some may have boyfriends/girlfriends and want to spend time with each other.

Young people will have been absorbing all of the information on the news and social media. We'd really encourage parents/carers and friends to reinforce the importance of social distancing. Explaining why it's important in slowing the spread of the virus and reiterating the important role they play in following the social distancing guidance and steps being implemented to tackle Covid-19. It normally works best with teenagers to ask questions and help them think it through rather than just telling them what to do.

It will be really important to listen carefully to their worries – it's probably a very difficult time for them – studies / exams have been disrupted, as have their normal routines and friends are so important. Young people have lots of ways of communicating with their friends through social media and via mobile phones. Under no circumstances should they be allowed to socialise in person and meet up with their friends. These restrictions won't be in place for ever. Things will get back to normal and it's important to reassure this.

Finally this is a worrying time and many young people may be feeling anxious about Covid-19. They may be worrying about friends and family getting ill as well as their own health. It is ok to feel upset or anxious, this is normal. Encourage young people to talk about how they are feeling. There are lots of online resources and Apps including virtual exercise classes.

Try and ensure everyone in the house gets plenty of sleep, continues to eat healthy and stays connected with friends/family via social media and telephone. If young people are regularly using social media talk to them about their social media use and make sure they are taking regular breaks.

The power of social distancing

