

Friday, February 5th 2021

Dear pupils, parents and carers,

As we approach the final week of this half-term of home-schooling, from our perspective I think we remain satisfied with how things are going. As I tried to stress in last week's bulletin, the help we have received from parents has been fantastic, and hugely appreciated, and the way in which school and home have come together to support our children's learning has been really pleasing to be part of. As always, please remember that ensuring high-quality education for your children is our job, and we do know how hard it can be for parents to manage home supervision of this alongside everything else parents have to do in their daily lives. As always, if you have any query or concern about your child's access to home learning, please do contact your child's form tutor or Head of Year and they will see how they can help.

Speaking of our Heads of Year, I am sad to share that our wonderful Head of Year 9, Charlotte Doughty, will be leaving KLA at half-term to move to another role, working as a Family Support Practitioner for the county council. Mrs Doughty's message to Year 9 pupils and parents is below, and I know that we will all miss her energy and dedication.

Message from Mrs Doughty

To my lovely Year 9's,

It is with so much sadness I write this but it's time for me to say farewell to you all. I will be leaving KLA on Friday 12th February for a new role within Norfolk County Council.

The saddest part of all this is that I can't say goodbye to you all in person, I know that you would've all showered me in leaving cards and made my last day memorable....and most definitely a tearful one. I can promise you, I have absolutely loved being your Head of Year, you have made me laugh, smile, cry and on a few occasions nag at you! But that's only because I know that you are all capable of achieving great things.

I can imagine you're all keen to know who will be your new Head of Year, so I am really pleased to be able to share with you that it will be Mrs McGivern. I know that you will all welcome her into our Year 9 family and show her just how amazing you all are. I will never be too far away and will be expecting to hear great things about you all as you continue through to Year 11.

So proud of every one of you 😊

We are really lucky at KLA to have such a skilled and experienced team, and as Mrs Doughty says above, I am very grateful to Mrs McGivern for agreeing to step into the Head of Year 9 role, which she will keep permanently. Mrs McGivern is hugely experienced, and was a brilliant Head of Year to last year's Year 11 cohort. She will work closely with Mrs Doughty in the coming few weeks to complete a handover and will lead Year 9 from Monday, 22nd February.

Parent Consultation Day

We held our first virtual parent/teacher consultation day for Year 11 on Wednesday, and feedback from both staff and parents has been very positive – the new system worked with only very few glitches and things appeared to run very smoothly. My thanks to parents and pupils from other year groups for being so accommodating in allowing us to move their lessons offline for that day to allow the time that Year 11 so desperately deserve to discuss their learning in this latest year of disruption.

We are very keen indeed to run more of these in the coming weeks (indeed, we may never return to traditional-style on-site parents' consultation evenings) and I will share details of these with everyone next week. We know that we would very much like to provide an opportunity for Year 7 parents to have a first chance to speak to subject teachers, as our usual suite of events for Year 7 parents have had to be curtailed this year, and that Year 9 parents and pupils need staff input in the options process which has recently begun. If we are to be able to do so properly, I would like to take a further day 'offline' after half-term, where pupils will access learning for the day remotely but teachers are not delivering live lessons, so that they can give their time to those parents in Year 9 and Year 7. Year 10 and Year 8 would then follow quickly thereafter, so that every parent has a chance to discuss progress in learning with our expert staff team before the end of this month. I hope that these suggestions meet with your agreement and approval. More info to follow next week.

Snow!!

As I write this, the forecast for Sunday through most of next week is for some snow! Although we will remain open for children of critical workers and those considered to be vulnerable, there may be fewer staff on-site if this forecast is correct, as I would not ask those staff who drive considerable distances to do so when they can currently work successfully from home. This may mean a little more disruption to some live lessons (e.g. if a teacher's home wifi is not as strong as it is in school) but we will monitor this to try to make sure we minimise any issues with it through the week.

I do want to stress one thing though – if we do get some significant snowfall, I am perfectly happy for children to spend some time during the day outside, making the most of it! We do not often see significant amounts of snow in our area (writes the Scotsman! 😊) and given that pupils are having to stay home anyway, I feel that enjoying the snow and being outside for a bit is going to be mentally much more beneficial for our kids than being stuck at a computer all day!

I have told all staff today to provide 'lighter touch' lesson content on Monday next week, so that if pupils do want to take advantage of the weather conditions to enjoy some fresh air and fun in the snow, they do not feel in any way guilty about missing schoolwork. As I have frequently said in these briefings, we will work with pupils when they return to make sure that their education is not compromised by several months out of school and we are confident that we can and will do just that – so one morning playing in the snow will not make any difference!! They can then complete their set work in their own time, hopefully while thawing out and enjoying a hot chocolate!!!

I hope that the intention behind this move is one that parents feel that they agree with. Of course, work will continue to be set for all pupils next week, and parents will have the choice of how they decide to approach home-school in the snow next week.

As always, my thanks go to my amazing team of dedicated staff for their consistent hard work, and to you for supporting their efforts so impressively.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best wishes,



Alan Fletcher