

BAR LANE
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**ELLIS
GUILFORD
SCHOOL**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

Friday, 16th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

First Half-Term Update

I wanted to write to give you some up to date information about our school this half term.

Even though we have been affected by COVID-19, we have continued to maintain and sustain the delivery of learning for all pupils in the school, with some remotely.

At the beginning of term, we introduced zones and bubbles for all year groups. These have worked well, and I want to say well done to all the pupils for the way in which they adapted to such changes, having been away from school for six months.

The new Year 7 pupils have settled really well. From the many, daily visits to classrooms I have made, along with the rest of the school's senior team, I have been super impressed by their eagerness to learn and attitude to the school. An excellent start Year 7!

Year 8 have also had to get used to changes. Year 8 line up in tutor groups, like all other year groups, 3 times per day where uniform and equipment is checked. Wearing their masks, they make their way silently, supervised by staff, and keeping a social distance, to their classroom. I have been impressed with Year 8.

Year 9 students have the tennis court 'bubble'. Year 9, in particular, have really settled into their learning routines. In lessons they have been focussed, polite and proud of their 'beautiful books'. Based in the Science block, they are learning well, listening well and making good progress, based on the feedback from SLT learning walks. Again, well done Year 9.

Based in the upper floor of the Guilford building, Year 10 is now beginning to understand the importance of studying for their GCSE exams. They too have settled well, and in many lessons, they are engaged and focussed. It has been great for me to see lessons in Performing Arts in particular. We have hugely talented pupils at EGS!



Year 11 have the Plaza as their space. We recognise the importance of study for them this year, and they haven't disappointed. I have not visited any lesson of Year 11 which hasn't been of a high quality. In the Year 11 zone, a focused silence, punctuated by strong teaching is the norm. In addition, attendance at revision sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday has been very good indeed, with up to 60 % of the year group giving of their time to attend.

Behaviour expectations and stronger discipline are now becoming embedded into the school's culture. Student expectations are very clear. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with very quickly, whilst students are rewarded daily with achievement points. As importantly, with the Class Charts app, you can now see for yourself how your child is doing throughout the day. Parents have taken the time to contact me to say how much they like this app.

The school will be contacting you at the end of the week to recognise the fantastic achievements of our pupils, for the number of positive achievement points, student of the lesson and excellent attendance.

Teaching has become much stronger due to higher expectations in the classroom. We have not used any external cover, and this has meant that pupils have been learning more effectively.

Next half term, we will continue to 'drive' the school forward. We will review the first half term and make some changes for the better.

Our key priority is safeguarding, making sure all children are safe, know who to go to if they have a concern and that staff are also fully trained in safeguarding. We have a new safeguarding team, led by Mr J. Williams, supported by two other members of leadership, Mr Gissendorf and Ms. Kirkham. I can confirm that all staff have received level 1 training and all pupils have had a virtual assembly on safeguarding this half term. Better behaviour, higher expectations and a greater number of staff on duty ensures that children feel safe in the school.

Wherever possible, we want to strengthen staffing in the school. We have identified two curriculum areas: Science and Humanities. From January 2021, we are planning to appoint two lead teachers in these subjects.

It is clear also, that the lockdown has left a number of pupils seeking support and counselling. We are, therefore, going to appoint a Mental Health and Wellbeing counsellor, who will have responsibility for supporting students, promoting better mental health where needed. I know that several pupils have expressed their concern about pupil wellbeing, and we wanted to support them.

With the support of our Trust, Creative Education Trust, we are going to make some changes to the front entrance of the school in the near future. Planning permission has been submitted to create a new pupil entrance on Bar Lane. This will provide a safer, clearer entrance and exit for students.



In addition, the area behind the canteen, which is the Year 8 zone, will be tarmacked, creating a better area for our pupils to socialise.

At the end of this half term, the school says goodbye to Mr Ellerby, Vice Principal, who has decided to seek a new venture. We thank him for his time at Ellis Guilford and wish him all the very best in the future.

These are exciting times ahead for the school. We will be determined to do whatever it takes to make Ellis Guilford, the school of choice for parents, carers, pupils and staff.

Thank you for your support over this half term.

I wish everyone a restful half term and look forward to our pupils return on Monday 2nd November.

Your Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Keen', enclosed in a thin black rectangular box.

Mr Chris Keen
Principal