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**ELLIS
GUILFORD
SCHOOL**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

Friday, 12th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Review of Spring Half Term 1 at Ellis Guilford

I write as we now enter the half term break to update you with news and information about the school.

Firstly, can I thank pupils, parents/carers and staff for the excellent work undertaken in continuing Remote Learning. We all appreciate everyone's efforts in supporting this. We have continued to improve what we do, whether that's through Remote Extra, Remote Engage or Remote Learning itself.

Numbers of pupils engaging have improved week by week, with the vast majority of pupils submitting between 1 and 4 pieces of work each day. As importantly, the numbers of achievement points awarded to pupils has risen massively. Last week, over 17,000 points were awarded and 800 'student of the lesson' postcards were posted to our pupils.

I know how tough this has been for everyone, but I want to say a huge well done!

In school, pupil numbers have increased week by week too. This week we have averaged over 150 pupils each day, all of whom have been taught by our staff, enjoyed a lunch and had time to be with their friends. The routine of school is so important, and these pupils have hopefully benefitted from this.

For pupils eligible for free school meals, we have prepared weekly hampers. Parents/carers have collected these from school, or a number have been delivered. I know the amount of hours taken to prepare hundreds of hampers and I want to thank again all those involved in ensuring this process ran smoothly. Ellis Guilford's very own Mr Knighton, 'Cooking with Mr K' certainly helped to engage and motivate a number of pupils and give the school an airing on BBC television!

I said we would review our hampers. From next week, we will replace these with vouchers which will be sent directly to the families. We will continue to do this until we know the date for the school to re-open fully.



We have also recruited a number of new staff into the school. Miss Johnson, Mr Jones and Miss Dunn have all settled very well into life at Ellis. All our new staff have been appointed as senior leaders, to continue our drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Miss Dunn is an experienced Science teacher, recently returned from teaching Science in Singapore, Miss Johnson is an experienced teacher of Geography and has led on our recent improvements in Remote Learning whilst Mr Jones has joined Ellis Guilford having previously held a positional of National Director for History with another Trust. I'm delighted to welcome them to the school and know they will be real assets moving forward.

I have been intent on making sure our social media profile continues to promote all the exciting events taking place in the school, even during lockdown. Last month, for the first time, we had over 20,000 'hits' as we actively publicised the achievements of our pupils as well as career events and mental health week. We have so many talented pupils in the school and we need to showcase and recognise their talents all the time.

Speaking of talent, congratulations to the pupils who performed in our Trust's Shakespeare festival. I have just seen the video, and all involved were tremendous, performing with skill and confidence.

The new concept of Virtual Parents' Evenings has continued this term and feedback from parents has been positive, saying that the arrangements were efficient, with no waiting in queues! Last night, the Year 8 parents' evening was very successful: many parents/carers praised the school and its staff for the support offered to our pupils during these trying times.

During this half term, the school has been reviewing its curriculum, looking to make sure that we continue to offer a wide range of subjects for all year groups as well as increasing options for students in current Year 9. This is exciting news and one which will allow pupils greater choice in the subjects they want to continue to study. Mr Fugill will be in contact after half term with more information.

For pupils specifically in Year 7 and Year 8, we are keen to learn more about what they are learning and what they are not learning. To support this, we will be asking pupils in these year groups to complete a number of assessments during weeks 2 and 3 of the next half term. These will take place over the course of the week, each lasting approximately 45 minutes. We will use the information to begin our planning for when pupils return properly to school. Alongside this letter, Mr Fugill has written a further letter which provides more details.



During this term, we have undertaken a review of Chromebooks and how they are used in school and at home. Certainly, during lockdown, they have been invaluable. However, we must be clear as their value in the classroom and whether they support our pupils in their learning, day to day. Once the review is complete, I will share with you the findings and how we will be expecting pupils to use their Chromebook in the school from September 2021.

Lastly, we will be having 2 new school minibuses delivered to Ellis Guilford in the next few weeks. Whilst we might not be able to use them currently, we all look forward to the day when we can have sports teams representing the school on a regular basis, as well as other opportunities for educational visits.

We miss all our pupils and there isn't a day that goes by when I hear staff wishing we had all the pupils back. We all await forthcoming announcements from the government about what will happen from 8th March onwards. In the meantime, pupils should take a well-earned rest from school, recharge the batteries and begin the Remote Learning programmes again from February 22nd.

Thank you for your continued support of our school.

Mr Chris Keen
Principal