

Dear <RecipientSalutation>

I hope that as we enter Day 4 of the lockdown you are all managing. As usual, please share this email with your son/daughter.

Yesterday your child should have been contacted either by phone or by email from their form tutor. We feel that it is really important that your child knows that we are still here for them. I hope that they found it helpful to speak to their tutor. If you haven't heard from them yet, they are probably still working their way through their tutor list.

Goodbyes

With such an abrupt end to this term we didn't get the chance for the students to say their usual goodbyes to staff who are leaving...

Mr Alston in Maths has been here on a maternity cover. His students have enjoyed their time with Mr Alston and will be disappointed to hear that he is leaving. However it is also great to welcome back Mrs Speakman to the Maths department and I'm sure that she will be in touch with her tutor group soon.

Also, a long-serving member of staff will be starting her retirement from Easter. Mrs Higgins really didn't want a fuss made as it was hard to leave after 21 years as Head of Art. During that time she has led one of the strongest departments in the whole of the school. As a person she always exhibited the values of a Balshavian and our motto non sibi sed aliis (not for self, but for others). I know that you will all wish her the very best for her retirement.

It also means that we welcome a new member of the Art department. Miss Ward will join the Art department from London, although she is originally from this area. There was an incredibly strong field of candidates for this position and we are delighted that Miss Ward will be joining the Balshaw's family.

How much school work should I be doing?

OK - there's not a straightforward answer to this! First of all, we won't be issuing you with negatives if you have not completed work! Everybody has limited access to the technology that enables you to work remotely. You may not have a printer, or a PC/laptop, or if you do it may be needed by your parents who will be trying to work from home too.

Ultimately, do as much as you can do - and remember, that reading a good book is always a good thing to do. It develops your imagination, your reading skill and speed, your spelling, your vocabulary and allows you to journey to different parts of the world in your imagination, if not in reality!

I'm a Year 11 - what should I do?

The same! As I said in an earlier email just for Year 11, you may want to sit an exam later in the year if you think that you will have done better than anyone expected you to. Your teachers are still setting work for you and there is all of the work in the Year 10 remote learning folders that you can be revising from. You will definitely benefit from doing as much work as possible.

A Challenge to you all:

A former colleague of mine and PE teacher has a video going viral of him doing 'keepie-uppie' with a toilet roll. I said that we can all use this opportunity to learn a new skill. Yesterday we tweeted Liv Cooke's video showing you how to do the 'round the world' move that is one of her signature freestyle football moves. I have been teaching my son how to play chess and he is now using the internet to teach me about the "Indian Defence" and other classic openings. I was never great at chess, so I am expecting to be defeated humiliateingly by an 8 year boy by the end of the week!

What can you do? If you have learned a new skill then let me know or send a video. If you are happy for us to Tweet it out, even better. Come on, guys - let's hear about what you have been doing above and beyond your school work to develop a skill. I have learned how to play the opening chords of Back to Black by AC/DC by snooping in on a WhatsApp music lesson this week!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Stay in, stay safe and remember that there are a lot of people praying for your safety and that of our whole community.

Best wishes,

Mr Steven Haycocks

HEADTEACHER

BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)