



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email:
info@garstangcommunityacademy.com

08 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of the strangest of terms, I wanted to share with you some thoughts and observations before we finish for Christmas.

General:

Since September, GCA children have been amazingly resilient and sensible and I want to thank them for that from the bottom of my heart – school would have been a very different place this term if our children weren't so absolutely amazing.

GCA staff have been equally resilient and professional and I also want to thank them from the bottom of my heart – again, school would have been a very different place this term if our staff weren't so absolutely amazing.

You guys – our parents and carers – have also been amazing – amazingly patient, thoughtful, supportive, polite and sympathetic – thank you!

Specific:

January timetable changes – children will return in January with new timetables. The reason for this is that Year 9 students will start their GCSE courses in January, but there will almost certainly be at least some changes to all year group timetables as a result although, we will keep these to a minimum in years 11 and 10.

Year 7 setting – having gathered lots of information about children over the Autumn Term, we are now in a position to put Year 7 children into broad sets in order to make sure that the challenge is always appropriate to the children in the class. Year 7 children should be informed of these new groupings just before we finish for Christmas.

Year 11

Mocks – these have gone really well, and students have applied themselves fabulously.

Summer Exams - There will be further guidance from the Government in January but it is certainly their aim for summer examinations to take place with various support mechanisms in place to mitigate against Covid related underperformance including:

- Students receiving advance notice of some topic areas covered to focus revision.
- Exam aids - like formula sheets - provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise.
- Additional exams to give students a second chance to sit a paper if the main exams or assessments are missed due to illness or self-isolation.
- If students miss one or more exams due to self-isolation or sickness but have still completed a proportion of their qualification, they will still receive a grade.



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email:
info@garstangcommunityacademy.com

/2

- If a student misses all their assessments in a subject, they will have the opportunity to sit a single contingency paper per subject held shortly after the main exams.

We are, therefore, still in a situation where a validated teacher informed assessment (Centre Assessed Grade) could be used so, for this reason, and to keep on top of exam preparation, it is still really important for children to maintain their performance level on all Exams/Assessments throughout the year.

Careers – on a related theme, I am delighted that so many Year 11 students are making well informed decisions about where they intend to go, and what they want to do, once they leave GCA, and please let us know if your child could do with a bit more support with this. Additionally, with one eye on the future, even if courses or placements break down in the year or two following their time at GCA, students can still contact us for advice and support on careers and further education and we will always do what we can to help.

Countdown to Christmas

We are running a student award Christmas postcard system in school every day, to thank children for hard work and positive contributions this term – hopefully your children will get one between now and Christmas – keep asking them.

This Friday 11/12/20 will be 'Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day' - children will be expected to contribute £1 to Save the Children to wear their Christmas Jumper in place of their school jumper/blazer for the day (other uniform to remain as normal, please), with contributions made to Save the Children via the Just Giving link on our Website not by cash on the day, please.

Friday 18/12/20 is an early finish (13.05 - Y10 & Y8 departure, 13.10 - Y7 & Y9 departure and 13.15 - Y11 departure) and as such there will be no lunches served – if this causes problems, please let your child's Progress Leader know and we will be happy to discuss providing a cold alternative. All year groups will have access to one of our canteens at break time (these will be staggered between 11.00 and 12.00).

Road Safety

We have a number of children who have started to come to school on bicycles and we are doing what we can to make sure that they are appropriately equipped for safe cycling. I would encourage parents of children who bring bicycles to take responsibility for promoting safe cycling, and sending children to school with lights, reflective strips and helmets.

Please could I also ask that parents always park legally and respectfully in the vicinity of school while picking children up to help make a very difficult process as smooth as possible.

Split Lunches

Responses to my previous letter were almost exclusively about split lunches and completely supporting the suggestion that we look to continue these after this current crisis. Accordingly, we are currently planning how best to do this while minimising disruption to learning.



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email:
info@garstangcommunityacademy.com

/3

Once again, thank you for all your support and encouragement this term. Clearly the hope is that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and, therefore, some movement towards returning to 'normal' in the not too distant future.

I wish you all a very safe and joyful Christmas.

Mr Ashcroft
Headteacher