



**Bexley Grammar School**  
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IB World School  
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1st April 2021

Dear Parent /Carer,

I was re-reading my introduction to the Easter edition of the School Magazine this morning - a summary of my reflections on this term and looking back at the same period last year. Another term of unbelievable change and adaptation for everyone in the school community. As I said in that introduction, I am deeply grateful to the whole school community for coming together through the challenges that 2021 has brought - "once again, this has confirmed that the very best in the BGS community is brought out in times of greatest need. Thank you all for your tremendous support."

We have communicated separately in letters about their reports to years 11 and 13 regarding the awarding of grades this summer in the absence of examinations and to year 10 regarding their parents' evening after half term. But at the end of term I would like to turn your attention to the summer term and some information for all of you to support your planning.

### **Key dates**

The DfE has given schools the option of adding an additional INSET day to support the process of grading for year 11 and 13 this summer in the absence of public examinations. Students will therefore not be in school on Friday 14th May - please add this to your diary.

We have managed to squeeze all the parents' evenings and examinations into the last term and the usual report cycles apply. We had our first virtual parents' evening for year 12 this week and despite some technical issues, we believe this may be a model that may last beyond pandemic restrictions. All the parents' evenings listed below will be held virtually using SchoolCloud - your year group will be given details nearer the time. For parents' evenings of years 7-9, all students will finish school at 2.30 pm. Please see the summary below:

Bank Holiday	Monday 3rd May (no school)
Year 10 parents' evening	Tuesday 4th May (Year 10 finish at 3 pm)
Year 9 examinations	Friday 7th May - Thursday 13th May
INSET day	Friday 14th May (students not in school)
Year 12 examinations	Monday 17th May - Friday 21st May
Year 10 examinations	Monday 24th May - Friday 28th May

*Half term* *Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June*

Year 7 & 8 examinations	Monday 7th June - Friday 11th June
Year 9 parents' evening	Tuesday 15th June (2:30 pm early finish for all pupils)
Year 7 parents' evening	Tuesday 6th July (2:30 pm early finish for all pupils)
Year 8 parents' evening	Tuesday 13th July (2:30 pm early finish for all pupils)

## **Sexual harassment**

You will be aware of the media attention that schools have received regarding sexual harassment in response to the tragic death of Sarah Everard. I am very grateful that we have been in school during this period because we have been able to discuss these vital issues with our students in a safe environment. The heightened national awareness has given students, girls and young women, a renewed voice to speak out and a chance for us all to expose and condemn all forms of sexual harassment. The 'banter' that spreads so easily on social media and from there into conversations, shaping attitudes and eventually influencing behaviour - the national debate has brought all of these aspects into sharp focus for us, both as parents and as teachers and we know there are ways to improve how we educate and influence our children in a school environment.

I am proud of our safeguarding systems and our focus on wellbeing - we received national recognition in the Wellbeing Award for Schools last year. My first responsibility as a headteacher is to keep your children safe. Our staff have regular training with strict monitoring and we educate our students about healthy relationships, respect and consent. We regularly review and update our safeguarding policy and associated policies which are all available on the website. I encourage you to read these and the regular safeguarding items and PSHCE updates in our newsletters and remind your children of these sources of information. But there is always more to do, and our students, especially in the sixth form, are leading that drive.

A group of students met to generate and coordinate ideas to help us, as a school, review our current practices and look for ways to improve what we do. It is so easy in emotive situations like this to demand immediate change with a poorly planned knee-jerk reaction. But I have been so impressed, yet again, by the thoughtful and sensitive approach that students have taken; our Head Prefect summarised their discussions in a beautifully worded, mature document which is forming the backbone of our response. We need to create more time in the curriculum to educate students about what constitutes sexual harassment and to identify and stop enabling behaviours. We are reviewing our behaviour policy in this light and will ensure that students are fully aware of the consequences of harassment. And we will explore new ways to support and encourage students to report incidents in addition to the existing systems which we advertise to students.

My new prefect team in year 12 takes over from my outgoing year 13 team after Easter and they will continue to work with me on these areas in the months ahead. This is an opportune moment to thank those eight outgoing students for their superb leadership of the student body through the turbulent times of the pandemic. I genuinely couldn't have asked for a better team.

## **Covid testing over Easter**

Finally, may I remind you to put reminders on your phone or notes in your diary to continue the twice-weekly Covid testing of your children over Easter with the kits we have provided, particularly on Sunday 18th April before we return.

I conclude where I began, with the school magazine. "Although the weather is not set to be as spring-like as we may have hoped for the Easter break, I hope the gradual lifting of national restrictions puts a spring in your step. Happy Easter!"

Best wishes,



Steve Elphick