

# Yateley School Parents' Bulletin

Issue: 14

Date: 12 February 2021



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## Learning Together – Empowered for Life

Dear Parents and carers,

As you make your way, wearily, into half term – thank you from us all here at Yateley School for what you have done to support lockdown learning and making it as successful as it has been. There have been major challenges for all of us and I'm well aware that many people have been juggling work commitments with supporting home learning, quite apart from a sizeable number of families having their own encounters with COVID. I like to think that we've done our absolute best and that the students have been well served by their teachers and the wider team. A lot has been made nationally in the media about lost learning and the damage caused, none of which I dispute. I do however want to pay tribute to the resilience, determination and ambition of our school community such that attendance in live lessons has been exceptional and progress has been strong. We've learned to teach more effectively in a virtual environment and students have risen to that challenge too. The dozens of positive emails that have kept coming in are testimony to what's being achieved and I thank you sincerely for these. Equally, the [virtuallearning@yateley.hants.sch.uk](mailto:virtuallearning@yateley.hants.sch.uk) email remains open for as long as lockdown continues and all concerns about online learning can be addressed through that.

You will be aware that although full school re-opening has been much discussed in the media, we are still awaiting a formal announcement from the Government. We are to assume that some form of return may happen from March 8<sup>th</sup>, although exactly what form that is to take place has yet to be declared. We also assume that return will be require mass testing of students for COVID in advance, although this too has yet to be clarified. You will be reassured to know that we have all the operational mechanism for testing already in place and we've conducted over 1000 tests on site. I am confident that whatever the directive, we can rise to the challenge. You can be assured that as soon as I am aware of the requirements, I will be communicating quickly and clearly with you, so as to give you (and us in school) as much planning time as possible. You can also be assured that we can't wait to see your child back in school; learning in the classroom and importantly socialising with their peers.

### Acknowledging Excellence.

I have had the great pleasure of writing to a very significant number of students to praise them for their magnificent efforts during this lockdown; not just keeping up with their learning, but really engaging and making excellent progress. Following nominations from teachers, I was also able to identify 11 students, who



for absolute excellence have received multiple nominations. They had

the unusual 'pleasure' of a doorstep visit from me with a certificate and chocolates to reward their first-class attitude and brilliant progress. They are: Elliot Casselton, Kezia Chacko, Oliver de la Haye, Lisa Duke, Molly Jacob, Katherine Mellor, Cobi Shambrook, Daniel



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Sharkey, Ulan Wearing, Edward Webb and Lucie Williams. (Katherine and Ulan were in school, so were spared the indignity of a home visit!) Sadly, there isn't space for pictures of all 11, so we've shown a small selection.



**Year 11 and Year 13 message.** We are acutely aware of just how stressful a time this is for our amazing Year 11 and 13 students. The cancellation of summer exams and the talk of some sort of 'mini-exams' being published to happen sometime in May/June is unsettling. What is the place of ongoing assessments? What about the delayed mocks from January? What about the results I eventually achieve in my mock exams? Clearly, the most important reminder here is that we are all on the same side and we all want the best for you! No-one wants to put obstacles in your way or make it a miserable experience between now and the summer. Underpinning all of this is that our judgment on grades will be evidence based and no individual piece of evidence will form the judgment of two years of hard work. In other words, if we have clear and consistent evidence of you performing at a higher grade, one weaker performance in an assessment will not derail that. The key is evidence and plenty of it so keep working hard in lessons and in your assessments. We will work hard to make sure that the dialogue with students and families is ongoing, so that there are no unpleasant surprises.

Whilst we are unlikely to be allowed to inform you of the grade we submit, we do not want it to be a mystery either! Your assessed work and your progress reports should give you a very good indication of the levels you have previously been working at. As soon as we know the dates/plans from the DfE consultation we will let you know a timeline and give more detail about what happens next. In the meantime, please don't worry, I know from your teachers that you're doing brilliantly and that the work you are doing now really does count!

**Please note** there was a published INSET Day on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, which would be pointless at the moment. This has therefore been removed and this day will be a normal teaching day. We would like to reinstate the day later in the academic year at a time which coincides with the moderating and collating of grades mentioned in the section above. We will announce the new date as soon as the timelines have been given from the Department for Education. Thank you for your patience with this.

**Cipher Challenge.** In the middle of this lockdown – and therefore without the support mechanism of school around them - a year 9 team completed the National Cipher Challenge and achieved the seventh highest score in the competition. The leader board is here: [CLICK](#) The team are called Crypto Crackers comprising - Elliott Casselton, Luke

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Price, Ben Seaborn and Matthew Davies. The four teams to take part this year (completely independently due to COVID preventing anything like a club or meeting) were:

Crypto Crackers (7<sup>th</sup> Highest Score)  
Nemonik (48<sup>th</sup> Highest Score)  
Yateley School (139<sup>th</sup> Highest Score)  
Yateley school is poggers (139<sup>th</sup> Highest Score)

## Anti-Bullying Update

During this time of remote learning and students being on-line more than ever, it is especially important that we ensure that our young people are being safe online.

The Anti-Bullying Ambassador team have put together a short informative presentation giving details about the team in school along with tips, guidance and resources. Please take a look.

- Presentation –  [CLICK HERE](#) (please note you might need to view in slideshow view for the video to work in the presentation)

## Head of House Assembly Messages

During lockdown we have been unable to run the normal year and house assemblies as we would like, however each Head of House has put together a special video assembly for their house. Please click on the link below to watch your house assembly video. Please note that on some web browsers it might say there is a security risk, there is not one we assure you, so please do click on the trust site for the video to open.

- Darwin -  [CLICK HERE](#)
- Nightingale –  [CLICK HERE](#)
- Pankhurst –  [CLICK HERE](#)
- Wilberforce –  [CLICK HERE](#)

## NCS Update

The National Citizen Service which we normally run with Year 11 students has not been able to operate as normal during COVID. However, the team at NCS are trying to work with schools to get some form of NCS sign up and activities planned for Summer 2021, but as you can appreciate this is changing all the time.

Currently they plan to release various videos and materials for Year 11 students and parents which Yateley School will share after half term. This will include resources packs for students; video assembly for students and parents and then a FAQ section. Further details will follow after half term.

If you would like further details about NCS and what they have to offer, then please visit their website – [CLICK HERE](#)

**Mental Health and Wellbeing** Some excellent resources have been put together by the BBC to support people of all ages with the mental health challenges that we frequently face. With podcasts, personal journeys, tool kits, mood music, activities and lots more there is a great deal here worth exploring. [CLICK HERE](#)

**And finally.** After an extraordinary half term, I'd like to wish all of our families a happy, healthy and restful holiday and a proper break. We'll be back in action on Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, which will be a Blue week – week one.

Yours sincerely

Paul German

Headteacher