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Fairfield Live! Update 4 February 5th 2021

Dear parents and carers

Congratulations on completing another week of home schooling with all the ups and downs that entails. Only a week until half term...!

Thank you to everyone – students and parents/carers – who gave some feedback last week. The majority of comments were very positive and I have passed on your thanks to staff for all their efforts. However we know there are always things we can improve on. I have explained before that we have to take a lot of factors into account when setting up remote learning, both on and off line; the availability of devices for students; siblings and parents competing for screen time; workload for staff; reasonable expectations for students and maintaining a balance between keeping students busy and engaged and having too much to do and getting overwhelmed, to name but a few.

Every week the senior leadership team and staff review our provision and share ideas and how we might improve on things. I share the concern of some of you about the amount of screen time remote learning is requiring; whilst it is difficult to see how else we might deliver the live lessons, I have asked staff to try to set offline tasks that don't always need screen time. In addition I have asked staff to reduce significantly the amount of off-line work set next week so that students are able to catch up anything missed if they need to, so they are up to date by half term. If your child has been super-organised and is entirely up to date, extension activities could include using the Oak Academy materials, BBC online, drawing or creating or reading their favourite book! There should not be any work set over half term; it is really important that both staff and students have a complete break from school.

We set the 4pm daily deadline in the hope that it would help students to manage their time and not 'stockpile' work. It seems that this has had the opposite effect for some students who are struggling to complete the tasks set in the time available, and are not having proper breaks as a result. In future the minimum deadline will be 4pm the following day or longer, so that students can have a break and complete a task later in the day, if that fits better around what is going on at home. There may be occasions in KS4 when a times assessment has to be completed in a shorter timeframe. However, we still expect longer deadlines to be met by everyone and would ask that you support your child in organising themselves to reduce 'slippage'. This is such an important skill for further education and work, and lockdown offers a great opportunity to practise it!

Finally, I know that some Year 10 and 11 students are worried about school having enough 'evidence' to support teacher assessment for GCSE. Please stop worrying – we have all we need via your normal classwork and assessments, and if we don't we will be talking to individuals. It won't be long before we are back at school which will give us plenty of opportunity to fill any gaps.

Best wishes for a peaceful (if wet!) weekend.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Gaston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'G'.

Sue Gaston
Head Teacher