

2nd October 2020



HEAD OF SCHOOL: Mr I Bacon

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted to say that the overwhelming majority of our students still seem enthusiastic, healthy and enjoying coming to school despite reaching that time at the end of September when students traditionally start to get tired and pick up seasonal colds. For children to be successful there has to be a solid partnership between home, school and student and I'd like to say a massive thank you to all of you for supporting your children with meeting the new expectations and routines we have at Watling Academy.

Over the last couple of days, I have been visiting lessons in all subjects and tutor groups and it has been great to see students engaged with some or all of the following activities: -

- Making pizza style bread dishes
- Investigating how glasses can help deteriorating eyesight
- Evaluating the extent to which the Watling Academy site is environmentally friendly
- Programming in scratch
- Comparing Time magazine to Go Girl magazine
- Writing a letter to their MP
- Practising football skills
- Discussing the relationship between the UK and the Irish Republic

We feel fortunate as a teaching team here to have such motivated and engaged students – so thank you from us to them.

I would also like to take the opportunity to update you on several items of information and news.

Trip to the National Museum of Computing

As you will know, due our current measures to keep us safe from COVID-19 we have temporarily paused all trips and extra-curricular activities. However, not to be deterred, we have arranged a trip to the National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park which will take place in the comfort of our own classrooms. The 'trip' will be delivered remotely in two parts – comprising a tour of the museum followed by some hands-on activities. The 'trip' will take place during STEM Innovation and Computing lessons over the next two weeks. Please be sure to ask your child about what they learned. Thanks to the museum for providing the trip free of charge and to Mr Houghton and Mr Bartlam for organising.

Respect / Responsibility / Kindness



WATLING ACADEMY C/O FAIRFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, APOLLO AVENUE, FAIRFIELDS, MILTON KEYNES, MK11 4BA

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Cognitive Abilities Tests

Alongside the feedback we are getting from teachers we use the GL Assessment Cognitive Abilities Tests (CAT tests) to help us identify any areas of support the students need, particularly in the light of time missed from school last year due to COVID-19. These tests will be taken online over the next two weeks starting next week (w/b 5th October). There is nothing that students need to do in preparation for the tests, just follow the instructions from the teacher at the time, concentrate and do their best. Please do talk to your children about the fact that they will be completing these but stress that they will be used to help us identify how we can help them best and if there are any specific areas in which they would benefit from support. There is absolutely no need to worry.

Office 365/Teams/Homework

You will be aware that we have been using Microsoft Teams to set homework for students, which should make it easier for you to see what work they have been set. I have attached a separate letter from Mr Bartlam explaining some of the processes and detailing some points you may find useful. Please contact him if you have any problems – his contact details are on the letter.

Lockers – good news!

I have been working hard to persuade the Council to provide us with additional lockers so that every student can have one and we are now able to issue an individual locker to every student. You will receive an email next week explaining the process of how to reserve a locker for your child. There will be a one-off charge of £5 that covers maintenance, cleaning and wear and tear, which will need to be paid via SIMS Pay.

Uniform

Another thank you from me to you regarding the standard of uniform and the way in which the students have worn the Watling Academy uniform with pride. Your support with this is much appreciated and members of the local community have commented on how well this reflects on the students. We have had a couple of queries about jumpers, so I wanted to explain why these are not part of the uniform. Nationally the average price of a school uniform is around £300 including PE kit and shoes and as a parent myself I know how expensive it can be if you have children going to a number of different schools. The aim was to establish a durable uniform with a washable blazer, that looked smart but kept the cost down for parents. Please do not send your child to Watling in a cardigan or jumper as it is not part of the uniform but we are, of course, more than happy for the students to wear a longer vest or underlayer under their shirt if they are cold.

Parent Governor Election

I am pleased to advise you that there is a space on the Governing Body for a parent governor and to launch the election I have attached a separate letter regarding this and a nomination form. Nominations must be completed and received by 4:00pm on Thursday 8th October. You can return your nomination by email to admin@watling.academy or hard copy delivered care of your child to the Academy office marked 'Parent Governor Election Nomination'.

Finally, I hope that you have either had or have booked your tutor consultation telephone call with your child's tutor. The relationship between the tutor and parents is absolutely key to the wellbeing and academic progress of the students and, as such, I hope that relationship is developing well and there is a clear channel of communication between you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'IB', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr Ian Bacon
Head of School