

Sackville News

Friday 18th December 2020



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Dear Parents and Carers

We have made it to Christmas, and **I want to thank the whole Sackville community** for helping us get there. This week was especially challenging with many staff being requested to isolate by the NHS COVID app. Mr Bush writes later in Sackville News about how we have managed this term.

We are delighted that the government has announced this week that **mass testing will be available in secondary schools next term**, when our staff will be eligible for **weekly on the spot tests**. This will help identify asymptomatic cases – which make up a third of all cases – limiting the spread of the virus. This will be backed up by daily testing for staff who have been in close contact with a positive case therefore eliminating the need for self-isolation and allowing them to continue to come into work.

Students will be eligible for daily testing if they have been in close contact with a positive case. **There is much more to learn about this and how it might unfold and we will keep you posted.**

We have also just learned that **years 7-10 and 12 will learn remotely during the first week back in January**. Our initial arrangements for this week are detailed later and **will be confirmed on Monday January 4th**.

As the vaccine begins to be rolled out for the most vulnerable it does seem there is an end in sight to the incredible challenges of this year, and I look forward to 2021 with a strong sense of optimism for all of us at Sackville. More than anything I am grateful for the **phenomenal hard work put in by all the staff at school** to ensure we can operate in as normal a way as possible. It was lovely to be able to **thank every staff member** as they left school on Friday lunchtime. Staff had also written messages of thanks to their colleagues on our **Tree of Thanks**.

We just wanted to thank Sackville and all the staff for an amazing team effort under the most extraordinary circumstances. We are so grateful students had uninterrupted education for the last term and can't quite believe it considering what the country is going through at the moment and it's down to the commitment and hard work of the staff.

Parent of year 10 student



Over this term we have done our best to make school as normal as possible to ensure our students are well-prepared for normality when it returns. Two weeks ago, we had our **virtual year 11 mock assembly**, where Mrs Sands, Mr de Souza and I were beamed into each year 11 registration base to congratulate the year 11 on what overall is a quite fantastic set of mock results. Now we have analysed the numbers, we know that **this year 11 are in as strong a position as last year's was in February**. This is testament to the amount they have worked and how seriously they took the exams after last summer's closure. Well done to them!

Our **Wednesday concerts** might only have been going for a few weeks, but they already have the feeling of being something of a school institution.

With the happy inspiration of **Mr Heatley and his music team**, every Wednesday lunchtime **live music** springs up somewhere round the school. For the last two weeks it has been the turn of year 7 to be entertained. Many have brought in their special Christmas hats for the occasion.

They were not to be disappointed, as a sprinkling of seasonal numbers were included in the usual excellent sets.



We would like to **thank our fantastic musicians** once again, but also **Ms Bartlett** and **Mr Hoelters** who are our super-efficient roadies each Wednesday.



Our **drumming students** have also put something together to bring a little Christmas cheer. To see the video in full, [click here](#). It is worth the watch!

The **performing arts are extraordinarily strong at Sackville**. We have missed the winter concert this term, usually a real highlight of the year. Our drama

performances have also been constrained by 2020, but earlier this week our **year 13 BTEC students** served up a wonderful musical theatre showcase with beautifully performed numbers from shows including *The Book of Mormon*, *Matilda*, *A Chorus Line*, *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, *Cabaret*, and *Mamma Mia*.



It was so refreshing to see some live theatre, albeit in front a masked audience reduced in size because of social distancing. As we went home to play those numbers again, we felt sure of some fantastic grades in the summer.

Well done to **Amber Davies**, **Alex Flude**, **Sophie Charman**, **Maddie Wrigley**, **Amy Hawtin**, **Anika Rahman** and **Rebecca Hollins**. Thanks to the great team of Mrs Hodgkiss, Ms Warran, Ms Bartlett and Mr Hoelters for making it all happen.



Wednesday saw our **school Christmas lunch**. These were delivered to each year zone in takeaway bags and were fantastic value. Several students came up to me spontaneously to say **how great the food was**. Now is a good time to say **thank-you to our canteen team** who have adapted so well to the new requirements, ensuring quality food is available to every year.

There have been a number of **'virtual visits'** for our students this term. The latest include a visit to the British Film Institute by our year 12 French class. The class were able to enjoy a live event about the cult film **La Haine**. This hard-hitting work is the film we study for 'A' level. The presentation was a great introduction to the film covering the film's themes and techniques and analysing two key scenes. Tout en français, bien sûr!



Y12 and 13 students had an amazing opportunity on Friday 11th December to **interview Mims Davies, MP for Mid Sussex**. Mims was exceedingly generous with her time and explained to the students her path into politics and her current projects and roles.

Our students devised some **exceptional questions** about the environment, gender issues and the role of the House of

Lords. The detail and the depth of her responses impressed the students greatly. Of particular interest was how the increased number of female MPs had led to a range of different topics being discussed in the house.

Mims also said she would be happy to visit the school again when it was safe to do so. Thank-you to Mrs Fleming for organising this.



sackville_eg Thank you to @mimsdaviemp for her time and highly informative answers to our politics and law students today.

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mimsdaviemp 🌟 Fantastic to join you all & really great, challenging questions 🍌

21h Reply



Our sixth formers have also been getting into the spirit of Christmas by helping **East Grinstead Rotary Club** to raise money. This year this involved a leaflet drop instead of the usual ride on Santa's sleigh, but we hope much money was raised nonetheless.

Thanks to **Nadia Usman**, **Queen Religioso**, **Hannah Sisley**, **Lucy Oxley**, **Caleen Chery** and **Jess Holland**.



This Christmas we have also been collecting for the **East Grinstead Foodbank**. The collection really grew over the course of this week, and we had to recruit **Frankie Poulton** in year 9 to help us get it packed and taken to the bank. Thank-you to everyone for their donations.

No Sackville Christmas would be complete without Mr Roberts' annual message. This year of course there was no chance of



delivering this via a school assembly; instead students got to see a video message on the last Friday of term. You can [see the video here](#), but will need to be logged in with your child's Sackville student account to enjoy it!

It's always nice to share news of former students. **Ollie Roberts**, class of 2017/2019, has managed since leaving school to complete his initial **army training**, even with the additional challenges of 2020.

Ollie is remembered at school for his diligence and perseverance. It is no surprise to us that for him completion itself would not be enough: in the process he also gained the '**Top Shot**' trophy and his **Marksmanship Badge**.

Ollie has now graduated to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and proceeds to Lyneham to complete his training. Well done Ollie and good luck for the next phase of your career.



I would like to pay a special thanks to **East Grinstead & District Association for Mental Health** this week, who have generously donated £250 to the school for initiatives to support health and well-being within the school.

The **association needs committee members**. If you think you would be interested, please contact [Penny Macfarlane](#).

Finally, as it comes to the end of another term it is time to say one goodbye. **Mrs Knock**, who has served us so well in several different roles will be leaving us to work with the early health service in East Sussex. Most recently she has split her time between being PSA for year 9 and our ELSA counsellor. Older students will remember her as a highly supportive LSA. No-one will forget her contributions to our school shows – who knows, perhaps she will come back to help with the next one. Good luck – we will miss you!

After Christmas we welcome **Ms Chapman** to our maths department. Ms Chapman has many years' experience teaching in Kent and Sussex and we look forward to her joining the successful maths team.

At the end of an exhausting but in the end very fulfilling term, it just remains to wish you and your families a safe and healthy Christmas, and a prosperous and, I hope, a more normal 2021.

Julian Grant
Headteacher

Navigating the autumn term

Mr Bush writes:-

When we entered this term we knew it would not be long until we had to deal with our first cases of Covid-19 from the school community, but we made it to half term with just a single case. Since then, as winter arrived and rates climbed across the country, we were not surprised that cases in school also increased. The last couple of weeks have been most difficult, but even so in the last 10 days some year groups have had no cases at all. Others were affected more with a few across each year group but no clear pattern or clustering. Some staff were also affected. Close contacts have been asked to self-isolate each time and deep cleaning undertaken. Our Public Health England advisors tell us that community rates are high and, in such circumstances, it is almost impossible to prevent Covid entering school; a [recent study](#) called the Schools Infection Survey reflects this view.



Our socially distanced open day

Crucial in the management of Covid in school has been the role of parents and we are extremely grateful for your vigilance and support. We hope you enjoy a Covid free Christmas break, but if not please carefully follow the advice which is below and on our website. Next term looks more hopeful as we are promised rapid lateral flow tests in school and a national vaccination programme. More on this will follow soon in 2021.

Reporting a positive case of Covid 19 during the Christmas break.

If your child has tested positive for Covid-19 having developed symptoms **on or before Sunday 20th December**, please contact Mr Bush by email at sbush@sackvilleschool.org.uk so he can assist with contact tracing. From Monday 21st December contact tracing will be led by the national Test and Trace team, but please inform the school of positive tests by emailing covidabsence@sackvilleschool.org.uk

Thanks again and wishing you a happy Christmas.

Provisional arrangements for the return to school in January

Please find below our initial plans for the running of the school during the first week back after Christmas, reflecting the guidance issued by the government on Thursday December 17th. **We will confirm final arrangements by lunchtime on Monday January 4th.**

We return to school on Tuesday January 5th, one day later than most schools. For the four days that week our arrangements will be as follows

- Years 11 and 13 will be in school** following normal lessons from 8.55
- There will be **no registration period**; students will go straight to lesson 1
- Years 7-10 and 12 will be taught remotely**, where possible using live lessons through Google Meet. Continued staff absence may impact our ability to deliver every lesson live
- Year 7 children of 'critical' workers will work in L01** with Chromebooks following the live lessons
- Year 10 parents' evening** to be put back a week till January 14th

January school calendar

As mentioned above, the **year 10 parents' evening** is now on January 14th.

A quick reminder that Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th January are **INSET days**. Our third and fourth INSET days are always in mid-January to allow us to run year 13 mocks with minimum impact on their teaching time.

The **year 8 parents' evening** this year has been put back to **February 4th**.

What our students think about life this term

Mr Street writes:-

At the end of November, we did some in depth student voice with two Year 11 classes, one Year 10 and another in Year 8 to capture their views and opinions on returning to school since September.

I am pleased to report that their feedback was overwhelmingly positive and just highlighted to me what adaptable, positive young people we have at Sackville. Students reported that they felt safe and Covid secure at school, which is incredibly important for both their physical and mental health, and consequently their ability to learn. The condensed structure of the school day and early finish was popular and overall they favoured not having to move around the school, but were understandably missing some specialist rooms.

They were very complimentary about their learning and showed an increased appreciation of school following the Summer Lockdown. Year 8 students did not feel that they were behind, but older students were a little more apprehensive about the learning that they may have missed.

Students were reassured by our online learning provision and were complimentary about live lessons. Some students preferred tasks set on Google classrooms to live lessons as they could then access the learning when they wanted and were able to manage their own time. I think it is important to stress that thirteen weeks into term and the fact that most students have had little or no blended learning is an amazing feat in the middle of a global pandemic.

Student wellbeing was on the whole good, with just a few feeling under increased pressure following mock exams. It was also noted that the new canteen arrangements were popular as there were no long queues.

I would like to thank parents and students for making this term go so well.

Helping younger students with maths

Ms Jeffcoat writes:-

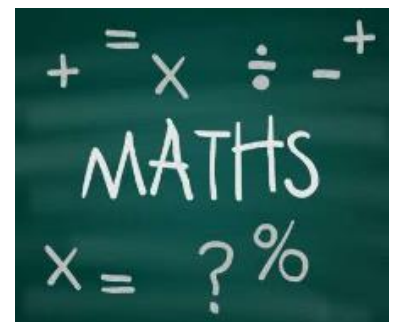
I hope you are all well and coping in these challenging times. I would like to invite you to a free webinar that is being run by a maths education company called Eedi. The focus is on common mistakes students make in maths in Years 6, 7 and 8 and most importantly how to help at home. The aim is to help parents feel better connected to school mathematics, and reduce the anxiety surrounding supporting their children.

Each webinar is completely free, and parents can reserve a spot here:

<https://eedi.com/webinars>. The dates of the webinars are:

- Year 6 parents: Jan 7th at 8pm

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- Year 7 parents: Jan 14th at 8pm
- Year 8 parents: Jan 21st at 8pm

In addition, they are throwing in a free Eedi Family subscription for a year to 10 randomly selected parents that attend too!

The webinar will focus on the 5 most common mistakes made by students of each Year. For each mistake they will suggest some free resources and activities that parents can use with their children at home to help them better understand the concept.

I hope this is something that some of you will want to take advantage of and I would appreciate any feedback if you do participate.

Thanks for reading and take care.

Celebrating Year 8



Mrs Tingley writes:-

We really wanted to celebrate the **effort and resilience displayed by year 8** this year despite the absence of celebration assemblies. Therefore, early in December, Mrs Mustard and I sent an email to staff requesting the names of students who had made an impression for all the right reasons and who deserved some recognition. We were inundated over the next few days!

Once collected in, **these names were added to paper baubles and hung on the Christmas tree outside our year office.** When students found their names, they were able to claim a small sweet treat in recognition of all they have achieved so far this year. Our Christmas tree is going to remain up until the end of the second week back in January so that everyone who has had a nomination can still join us and receive their prize.

We'd just like to finish by saying a huge well done to all students and form tutors in Year 8. You continue to impress and amaze with how wonderful you are. Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year from both Mrs Mustard and me.

News from the LRC

Mrs Rose writes:-

Let us start by stating the obvious: it's been a strange start to the school term! No students have been allowed into the library. The space has become an extra area for staff to work during lesson time, if not teaching, and *reviving* at break and lunchtime.

Mrs Wogan and I have had to adapt to ensure students could still borrow and enjoy the wide range of resources on offer. But how?

We have an excellent library management system called *Accessit*, which allows students to browse the books virtually. Using this system, and arranging extended access via the phone app, we decided to operate a delivery service to students. Students can use *Accessit* via the website or phone app to order books and we receive a message in the library. We collect the books off the shelf and deliver them to the students during their lesson or at tutor time. You can often see us walking round the school site with our delivery box!



Returned books are put into a dedicated box in each year office and quarantined for 3 days before being lent out again.

We carried out training with each class to show the students how this would work and it appears to be working well for both students and staff.

If any student has not got the app yet and would like to download it then please email the LRC at: lrc-library@mysackville.co.uk for details.

We did manage to squeeze in a little Christmas competition to win some festive treats. This was a word search, which had a Christmas theme. The winner, drawn at random from all the correct entries, was Lauren Pitman 7FLD (Pictured) and runners up Isaac Minns, 8OSE, and Alice Collcutt, 7SJT.

There were so many entries that we decided to give out a few extra sweet treats to students, drawn at random.

Prizes were taken to the winners this Wednesday and Thursday tutor time. Students not in will get

their prizes after the Christmas break.

We miss the students in the LRC and look forward to their return sometime soon...

Please all stay safe and well. Enjoy your Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Uniform shop

Please note our uniform shop is now closed till the New Year. **It will open again on January 2nd** from 10.00am till 2.00pm, and at the same time every Saturday.

Invigilators

We are once again **looking for invigilators**. If you or anyone you know would like to join our excellent team who are so important in delivering our exam success, please see the advert and application form [here](#).

Student help pages and video guides

For any students or parents who might want help getting to grips with the digital platforms which seem increasingly important in education, our IT team have produced some really useful help materials which you can find on our website [here](#).

West Sussex County Council are currently consulting about the school run, and whether it has been affected by this year's events. They are also interested in any specific issues you may be experiencing. They have a five-minute survey for parents to complete. Please [click here to take part!](#)