

# Sackville News

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020



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Dear Parents and Carers

For the first time ever the *Oxford Dictionary* has been unable to come up with a single *Word of the Year* for 2020, as there are so many for this unprecedented year. If we were to have Sackville words of the year, one would certainly be **'fortunate'** when considering how **lightly we have been affected by COVID cases this term compared to so many other schools**. The rigorous systems we have put in place and maintained day-in, day-out have clearly contributed towards this and I must, once again, pay tribute to **Mr Bush** who is tireless and precise in his approach to managing the situation and support us all through it. None of us know what the immediate future might bring as situations are so localised, but we are certainly **well prepared**. The **staff in the school have been absolutely marvellous** in their incredible dedication towards offering the **best possible educational experience** to the students against the most difficult odds, especially considering the requirement to move across the school to different classrooms in different zones, lesson by lesson all day to teach. They are also going to considerable lengths to keep the school **clean** and provide a **catering service** that is safe and, I believe, unmatched in the way it is delivered to, and distributed safely within, different zones of the school. At the same time as this, they are doing their level best to provide work for absentees and link their lessons to online platforms. In my mind, **they are all frontline heroes!** Last but clearly not least, our **students never cease to amaze me** with their fantastic approach to the whole situation in these anxious times. They are having to cope with uncertainty never before experienced by school students and their resilience is certainly a reflection of fine parenting – thank you!



Our year 11 students completed their **first set of mock exams** in November very well, with a small number sitting them at home in isolation for a few of the days. As staff worked so hard to mark the papers, it became clear that year 11 must have worked extraordinarily hard for these tests. Many staff have reported that the students' performances not only **matched those of last year's GCSE students** but in many ways were **better**. Loyal readers will be well aware that our GCSE results are significantly above the national average, and for our current year 11s to be matching the autumn mock performance of the last few years demonstrates the level of commitment shown both during the summer closure and since.

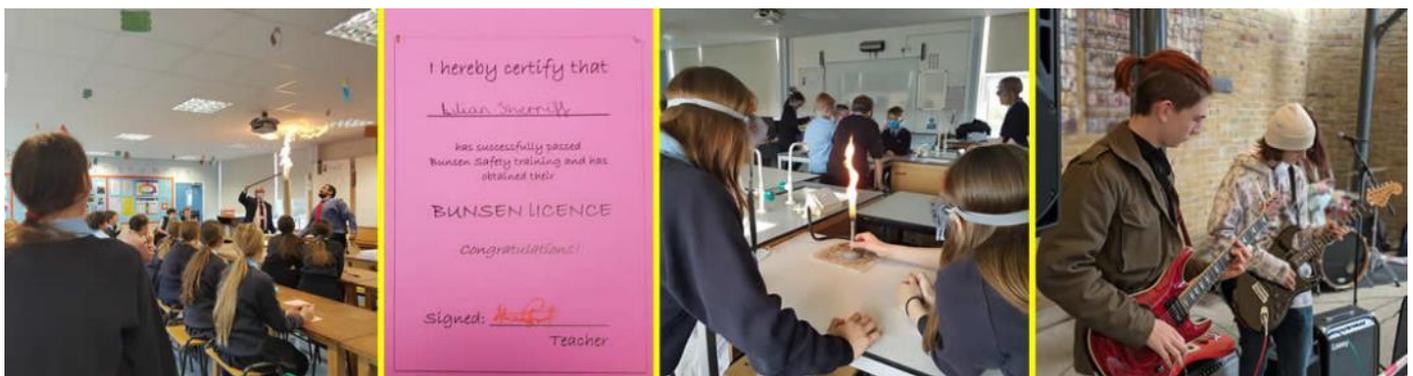


We were genuinely impressed with how seriously the students who were isolating took the exams. Many papers came in where candidates had run out of time and had marked the papers as

unfinished. **Well done year 11 indeed.** They more than deserve the pen they received this afternoon as reward for their hard work.

You may have heard yesterday that there are [likely to be some changes to year 11 and 13 exams next summer](#). The full details for each subject have yet to be issued, but rest assured we will incorporate every change immediately to ensure the maximum chances of success for Sackville students.

Our efforts to keep the school running as normally as possible have meant that this has been a successful term in other ways too. Our science teachers used the space left by the year 11 exams to allow year 7s to have their first visit to the labs. **Careful cleaning of the rooms before and after** means we can get our year 7s to complete their **Bunsen licence** (and have a bit of scientific fun besides). These students have had thirteen weeks learning science, and indeed all of their subjects, in business, music and drama rooms, so the sight of a gas tap is excitement enough, let alone **lighting a Bunsen** and seeing **Mr Langford's pyrotechnics**. For those of us lucky enough to be there, the sight of the excitement is not something we will quickly forget and reminds us all how good it will be to return to normal at some point in 2021. Well done to all our year 7s and thanks to our science staff.



In the meantime, to bring some cheer to the end of 2020, our musicians have instigated the **Sackville Wednesday Concert**, every Wednesday lunchtime in a different part of the school. We have been entertained by some fantastic musicians over the first three weeks and we look forward to the spectacular talent coming next.



Some of our former music students have recently made the headlines as well. Former student **Ethan Stahl** (class of 2015) featured in *The Guardian* on Saturday 14th November as the bassist in up-and-coming neopunk band *Chubby and the Gang*.

Ethan is the one with the leather jacket (second right) ... and the wicked sideburns.

And now news comes that **Dan Keen** (class of 2013/2015) has been instrumental in the creation of **Gary Barlow's latest album**. Many will remember Dan as a truly outstanding all round musician and an incredibly special

pianist.

Dan has been working with Gary Barlow for some time now, with his biggest contribution being assisting with the orchestration of the backing music for the new album '**Music Played By Humans**', released in late November.

This is an amazing achievement for Dan, still only 23, and we look forward to hearing a lot more about him in the coming years.

Our bet is that for his next album, Gary is going to want Dan back for good.

Our next generation of musicians are also being well looked after. On Monday of this week, we were delighted to welcome **concert pianist Richard Meyrick** to Sackville on Monday November 30, by *Zoom* of course. Richard delivered a piano masterclass to **Ben and Thomas Salter, James Fanner and Matthew Botten**.

Richard listened to the students play, offering them specific tips on how to improve and flourish. Richard also played to the students with incredible musicality showing his wealth of experience. We would like to thank **Sir and Lady Harvey McGrath** who **graciously sponsored this opportunity** and we hope to welcome Richard back soon. Thank you to Richard, and well done to the students involved.



Our **virtual visits** have continued, with **Her Honour Judge Venn** the latest visitor. Our **year 12 and year 13 law students** shared a **virtual lunch** with Her Honour and got the chance to interview the local Circuit Judge about her job and career.

Judge Venn, who has visited Sackville before to talk to students about the judiciary, candidly explained the **difficulty that Covid had caused** the legal system and how they had adapted carrying out virtual trials.

The students really appreciated the Judge taking the time to show them her courtroom and her advice for those considering careers in law. They really appreciated her showing her judge's wardrobe and describing the ceremonial outfits she sometimes has to wear.

This week our **year 13 economics students** attended a day conference, virtually of course, and enjoyed sessions by examiners and some well-known economists, including Tim Harford.



Meanwhile four of our year 12 students delivered their final presentations for their **Extended Project Qualifications**. The students presented in an incredibly professional manner, on a very diverse range of subjects.



**Ben Brown** - To what extent was the bombing of Dresden justified?

**Finn Crawford** - To what extent has the representation of autism in the performing arts industry changed and how has it affected the awareness of autism and how do the sections of media reflect societal understanding of autism?

**Emma Allen** - How has DNA profiling impacted modern police investigations from its original discovery?

**Mia Sloane** - Assess the most effective methods used by the UK intelligence agencies to intercept the communication of terrorists in the last 20 years.

Here you can see **Emma** presenting to assessors Mr Keeble and Mrs Morris. The talk was also broadcast into the homes of other audience members.

I have also been lucky enough to enjoy presentations by students from **Brambletye School**. With **Mrs Stuart** I was invited to judge their verse speaking competition for year 6 students.



It is always a pleasure to work with different schools, and there is much that we can learn from each other.



Our annual **support staff tea** was a little different this year. Instead of inviting all of our staff to be served tea by the leadership team in the canteen, a takeaway cream tea was organised by our wonderful catering team, and our support staff had to drop in and pick up their goody bags.

We hope we can go back to our normal arrangements next year with full fanfare, and once again show this outstanding group of staff how much Sackville depends upon them.



Three weeks ago we had our annual **Children in Need non-uniform day** and well **over £1000** was raised for this important cause. On the last day of term we will once again be raising money for charity and inviting students and staff to wear a **Christmas jumper** in exchange for a contribution.



And it is almost Christmas already. Celebrations have started at Sackville. We have several trees up around the school, including this beautiful one at Reception donated as every year by **Graham Keenor** in memory of his son **Paul** who was tragically killed five years ago responding to a firefighting emergency.

We are getting ready for the festive season as best we can. We will be doing a **Christmas lunch** for each year group, though this will also be in a takeaway grab-bag. This can be paid for online now.

We have also had our third **Big Reveal** this week, with tutor groups really going to town with homemade decorations. I really enjoyed touring the whole school with Mr Feist, though having to choose a winner was



impossibly difficult. In the end, our **general office was the overall winner**, with very honourable mentions for the tutor rooms of **12-13MBH, 8KPE, 7SJT, 7THR, 7RSH, 7JCK**. Do look at the website for more photos!

As we approach the last two festive weeks of term it only remains for me to wish you a safe and healthy run-up to Christmas.

Julian Grant  
Headteacher

## IT access at home

Mr de Souza writes:-



One thing that we have learned this year is that seemingly cannot have enough internet connected devices in the home. It is likely that some shifts in practice forced upon us this year will not be reversed, and the demands for devices in the house will only increase.

None of this is cheap of course, but recently I have come across a couple of ideas that might make a difference at a more affordable price than a full-blown laptop or netbook.

Most students have a mobile phone, but it can be frustrating to use with some apps as the on-screen keyboard can use a good portion of screen real-estate. For around £25, a portable Bluetooth keyboard removes that problem. The one I have been trialling is made by Geyes and is available (of course) from Amazon. Plenty of other designs and makes are also available.

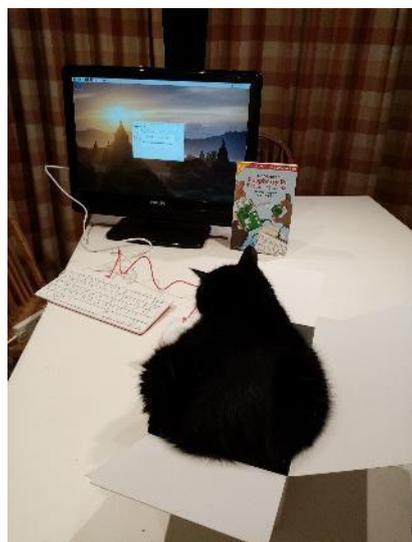
It's quite comfortable to word-process using this device, and all of the phone's screen can then be used for using Google's G Suite or other common apps.



More impressive is the new [Raspberry Pi 400 Personal Computer Kit](#) (right). For £95 you get a fully working Linux based computer. You do need a screen to go with it, but any TV less than 15 years old should have the requisite HDMI input. Asking around often yields old computer monitors as well.

It takes very little time to get up and running, and in no time students can be playing those YouTube educational videos, and doing their online homework. Mine was up and running in about half an hour (most of which was downloading a software update, which at least seemed to entertain the cat), and is becoming something of a favourite.

There's a lot more to it than just working as a Chromebook equivalent though – it's a genuine hobby machine, and for those who enjoy a bit of coding and exploration it is an absolute snip.



### SECOND HAND UNIFORM

The second hand uniform shop is now in place – **most items only £1 each**

We have shirts, skirts, trousers and PE kits all waiting for a new home!

Please visit reception to ask to see the stock or ask your child to visit at lunchtimes.

We ask that you are patient if Reception is busy at the time you visit.

**Is your child now too big for the shirt you bought 6 weeks ago? Please give it a new home at the second hand shop, all clothes donations to reception gratefully received.**

# Guide to managing children's screen time

internet matters.org

**Effect on behaviour**  
Constant use of a device and features like auto-play on platforms can be habit forming and encourage children to spend longer on screens

**Effect on the brain**  
Screens can have a drug-like effect on the children's brains which can make them more anxious. It can make children more forgetful as they rely on things like Google, GPS and calendar alerts to look up information

**Effect on sleep**  
Blue light from phones can trick the brain into thinking it's still daylight making it difficult to sleep

**What are the benefits?**

- Gives children access to a **wealth of information** to build their knowledge
- Technology **takes away physical barriers** to social connections to make children less isolated
- Exposure to tech has proven to **improve children's learning and development**
- Online games and activities **enhance teamwork and creativity**

# 10 tips to get in control with your child's screen time

- Set a good example** with your own device use
- Have discussions about the risks** that they may face based on their online activities
- Put in place a family agreement** and agree an appropriate length of time they can use their device
- Help them build critical thinking** to understand that some features on platforms are design to keep you watching or playing
- Encourage them to **switch off auto-play** on platform to remove the temptation to binge on programmes
- Use tech tools** and parental control to manage the time they spend online and the apps they use
- Get the whole family to unplug** and create 'screen free' zones at home
- Together find apps, site and games that will help children **explore their passions** and make screen time active
- For younger children find ways to **combine touch screen use** with creative and active play
- Encourage children to self-regulate** the time they spend online and the activity they do to ensure they are having a positive impact on their wellbeing

# TIER 2

# HIGH ALERT

FROM 2 DEC

<b>MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY</b>  <p>No mixing of households indoors, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six outdoors.</p>	<b>BARNS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS</b>  <p>Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals. Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.</p>	<b>RETAIL</b>  <p>Open.</p>	<b>WORK AND BUSINESS</b>  <p>Everyone who can work from home should do so.</p>
<b>EDUCATION</b>  <p>Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Childcare, other supervised activities for children, and childcare bubbles permitted.</p>	<b>INDOOR LEISURE</b>  <p>Open.</p>	<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>  <p>Open.</p>	<b>PERSONAL CARE</b>  <p>Open.</p>
<b>OVERNIGHT STAYS</b>  <p>Permitted with household or support bubble.</p>	<b>WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS</b>  <p>15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships, wedding receptions and wakes; 30 for funerals.</p>	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>  <p>Open.</p>	<b>PLACES OF WORSHIP</b>  <p>Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.</p>
<b>TRAVELLING</b>  <p>Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if possible. Avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble. Avoid entering a Tier 3 area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply.</p>	<b>EXERCISE</b>  <p>Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but cannot take place indoors if there is any interaction between people from different households. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.</p>	<b>RESIDENTIAL CARE</b>  <p>COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/airtight visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).</p>	<b>LARGE EVENTS</b>  <p>Sport, live performances and business meetings limited to 50% capacity or 2000 people outdoors (whichever is lower) and 50% capacity or 1000 people indoors (whichever is lower)</p>

## Find out what support you can get

For example, if you're out of work, need to get food, or want to take care of your mental health.

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## If you have any coronavirus symptoms:

A high temperature • A new, continuous cough  
A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste.

Get a test and stay at home

For more information and detailed guidance visit:  
[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

