



BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Borden Grammar School
Avenue of Remembrance
Sittingbourne
ME10 4DB

7 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have seen some interesting headlines surrounding education over the last two weeks. The secretary of state for education has said he wants to reduce mobile phones in schools whilst a research study on the BBC this week concluded that there is no correlation between a young person's use of technology and mental health.

Mobiles: So where do we stand at Borden? Our current view on the use of mobile phones, and technology in general, is that we try to train young people to use them appropriately. This is a much more difficult approach for a school to manage than just banning them outright, but has the potential to have a greater positive impact in the longer term. That doesn't mean we don't have high expectations in school i.e. only in social spaces at social times and always used appropriately, and mobiles will still get confiscated if used inappropriately. However, this closely links to the next point.

Anti-Bullying: Borden also recently took part in a national anti-bullying survey and the results were interesting. Whilst we came out as a much safer and happier place to be than schools nationally in almost all areas, there were a small number of areas where we were 'in line' with other schools, which makes us want to do better...One of these areas was E-safety and particularly the inappropriate use of ICT outside of school. We have therefore helped establish a student E-safety team in the 6th form who have had their first meeting and now have a plan. The piece below is written by the 6th form team for students, so please do read it yourself, but also pass this on to your child to read. We also saw our Year 7 anti-bullying ambassadors trained and given badges recently. This is supported by 6th form mental health first aiders and our E-safety 6th form team. It shows how many of our students want to help others, making me proud to be their Headteacher.

Language: The other area mentioned in the survey is about language use. We know that sexist, racist and homophobic language is an issue in broader society, but it has no place in our school. There are two sides to how we deal with this, (a) to educate (and if necessary sanction) where inappropriate language is used and (b) to support the development of positive vocabulary - even academic vocabulary. Some of the best ways to do this are by encouraging reading, using the language ourselves as teachers and parents, and by reinforcing our Borden values - particularly those of kindness and respect. The reason I write to tell you all this, is so that you know that we take it seriously and so that you may be able to help reinforce the messages we are sending at home.

Y11 and 13 Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs): For those in year 11 and 13, we are now well and truly into a period of assessment. More emphasis is placed on work produced in controlled conditions and so we are assessing students to give them the opportunity to provide evidence that represents their ability that we can then use as evidence. However, we are required to make a holistic assessment of work completed across the course to decide on a grade that fairly represents a student's ability. The default position is that this work needs to be completed across a cohort, so there is no 'cherry picking' of work. Please therefore remind your child that they should not be asking for their overall grade or putting pressure on staff to re-do work to make it better, as this could be considered malpractice and we may need to report it to the exam board. However, staff will talk to the students about the work they are including in their portfolio of evidence during the course of this half term.



Headteacher: Mr A Tomlin MA NPQH



Whilst both Year 11 and 13 are finishing at half term, they will need to be contactable up until June 18th in case we need to discuss their evidence further. If you wish to learn more, the school's Centre Policy is available in the "support and guidance" section of the school website under the Learning tab, and also includes the frequently asked questions letter previously provided. It should be noted that the guidance for schools only came out the week before Easter and this is a very different process to last year.

Early Finish: As you may be aware, the decision for schools to plan, assess, standardise, moderate, compile and present portfolios of work for Year 11 and 13 is a massive task that has to be completed in a very short period, with no additional time or resources provided. We will therefore be finishing early on Monday 7th June at 2pm, in order that staff can have a block of 3 hours to compile the folders, finish moderating and complete the additional paperwork. Students will still have their usual lunch and buses will collect students earlier (2.15pm).

Covid: As far as Covid goes, nothing has changed in school. All of the systems of control including sanitisation, mask wearing and track & trace, remain in place until we hear more. Whilst the situation is clearly much better at the moment, there has been a national rise in school absence through isolation in the last week. Since we all want things to keep getting better, and because there is a human tendency to 'relax' when things improve, please remind your child of the need to remain vigilant and take these restrictions seriously both in and outside school.

Finally, in line with Mental Health Awareness week approaching, I have attached a document raised by our Safeguarding Lead with signposts to various resources we feel are of value.

Thank you again for your continued support,



Ashley Tomlin
Headteacher



**What you type
Matters.**

Hello to everyone reading this from the Borden e-safety team. Over the next few months we hope to be interacting with lots of you in a constructive manner. We will try to help raise awareness by taking a new approach to e-safety but we want to do it in a more 'youth friendly' way. You may start to see posters and videos with different messages pop up around the school. These are all in an attempt to bring awareness to the importance of Internet safety - whether that being changing your passwords every now and then, or thinking for a few moments before you send an image. Little things can make a huge difference in your life. Every week we're going to try and focus on a particular aspect of internet safety.

This week is 'What you type matters'. We want to focus on the importance of thinking before you type. Just always remember, there is someone on the receiving end of your comments - in person or not. It's easier to send a hateful message over the internet than in person. But the consequences are often the same, in the same cases worse. So it's really important you think about the whole potential impact of sending a message (even if you think it's not too bad). The age old saying of "would you like it if someone did it to you?" sits well here.

We want to tailor provide advice for KS3 and KS4. Each year offers different e-safety challenges and it's important that we identify these equally and more in-depth. For example, Year 8s /9s may only be starting to use social media, but year 11s may have different digital footprint e-safety concerns (especially thinking about future job interviews). You can't blanket advise a whole school and expect everyone to take everything in. By creating more individualised e-safety tips, we can make it easier to understand the risks most concerning you.

Hopefully soon you should all have access to a Google form where you can answer questions relating to your e-safety experiences. However, the most important part is student input. It doesn't have to be a bad thing, but you may have a general question or some ideas to make e-safety advice better. Of course if you do have a problem, we absolutely want to hear so we can try and help sort out the problem.

I hope this introduction makes clear our aims and potential plans for e-safety at Borden Grammar School. We want to raise awareness of e-safety and try to tackle the problem in a way that we think will get everyone on board and where students are prepared to talk about difficult issues.

We all look forward to working and hearing from lots of you.

E-safety team, Borden Grammar School.