

Parent Newsletter 24 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been an absolute pleasure to be back in touch with our school community and see students responding this week. As we reach the end of our first week back I am in a position to update you on a few issues and thank you again for your continued positive communication and support. As previously this update attempts to combine several areas of information and with the school office now open please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions that arise.

You may have seen reports in the last week about school's reopening. I think it is reasonable, when viewed in the round, to see a lot of the information as political 'kite flying' to ascertain the strength of public opinion over certain critical issues that would need to be addressed before any form of reopening could happen. The position of myself, the leadership team and governors is clear. We will only reopen to more students when it is safe to do so. That will be after a carefully considered set of risk assessments that cover all aspects of the school, our context and our students. I am aware of a number of ways we can boost confidence in any reopening through looking at and reading about the direct school experience of head teachers in countries such as Denmark who have already begun phased returns. We are desperately keen to see our students again and re-establish our wonderful learning community but not at the expense of the health and safety of our students, our staff or our wider community.

Thank you to everybody who nominated Bohunt staff for the Sussex Teacher of the Year awards. I had to complete a significant number of references as a result of your nominations. I am delighted to share with you that our Assistant Head Miss Palmer found out this week that she is the successful winner of an award and will be invited to the celebratory evening later in the year.

As always we are very appreciative of your patience, positivity and understanding as we negotiate this term. Every family and every school will approach this differently and will experience it differently. There is no 'right' way. I am very proud of our community and our ethos. In these times more than ever students will benefit from routine and staying connected to learning, from being safe and loved. We all benefit from being kind to ourselves and each other. We will navigate each phase as it comes and will communicate with you as openly as possible at each stage.

Best wishes

Mr Whitehead

School News:

Our wellbeing day made for a really smooth start to term and we were really pleased that 75% of students completed our wellbeing survey on Monday. Details of the outcomes are included in other parts of this update. Our PE Department led 'Let's Get Active' exercise challenge on Monday, a copy can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Dyo_jvwL2rpXqP8R5oeKSx2DdWlIVsxe/view?usp=sharing. All students were encouraged to follow the different videos to keep fit and active during this period. I would like to congratulate Mr Goldberg on receiving the most amount of views at a staggering 488 views for his fitness challenge video, his video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/ranmYbBNH6c>

We continue to support up to 10 students weekly in school with remote learning and staff who are volunteering to come in. Our blog this week celebrates lots of student achievement - please take the time to look at it when it is released.

From Monday our Y11 students will be following a Post 16 curriculum in recognition of the fact that typically they would have been reaching the exam season at this time. There will still be GCSE subject work to complete should they wish and the full will be sent to them and parents in a separate communication by Monday. We were pleased to announce earlier this week that our local supplier Pinnacle created an online shop for our Year 11 students and parents to purchase their Leavers Hoodies. All the information was sent to parents in the week.

Home learning Years 7-10:

Home learning is a new experience for everybody and we have tried to approach it flexibly with a view to meeting the diverse needs of all our community. We very much appreciate that routine is important and reassuring to young people at this time so from the start we deliberately have set up a structure that incorporates our typical school day and this has not changed. It means that students can use our daily timings to complete their work should they and their parents wish. Critically we also have two slots a week when teachers' review how each student in their classes has engaged with the work set and we make contact with families if we can see there is a problem to offer help and support. We have to use the behaviour system to collect this information but I would like to remind you that this is not a disciplinary process and all records will be wiped when we return to normality.

Based on feedback at the end of the first couple of weeks we adjusted the structure so that the resources for each day's classes were released together at the start of the day, rather than waiting until the exact time of each lesson. This was because a number of families had other commitments or routines that they needed to follow or specific limitations at home based on parents who were homeworking, the need to share resources, levels of internet access etc. Many students continue to follow their normal day however those that are unable to do so should not feel anxious or stressed for understandable reasons that are perhaps beyond their control. It is for parents and their children to decide the structure of the day including when they should get up, complete work, go on their games console, relax, take exercise, and watch TV etc.

It remains our strong advice that following the school day unless there is a reason you cannot is the best way to behave. Students who complete work before the lesson time do not have the benefit of teacher input and availability which means they can struggle or produce work of a lower standard.

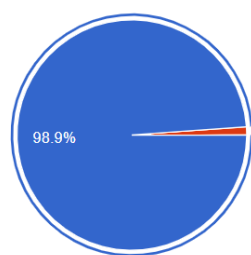
We are looking at how more video related interactivity can be delivered but there are many barriers to this some of which include safeguarding, technology and internet stability and staff training. Staff will continue to be available for electronic contact during the vast majority of their lesson slots. We used some of the time on Monday to enhance staff skills and I hope students will see more video footage of teachers explaining tasks etc. going forward. Live lesson streaming would be fantastic but with teachers in lockdown in their own homes and everybody's internet connection a variable area it is still unlikely that this will be the standard we reach for all staff with all classes. We are exploring how this could be implemented as an enhancement in certain areas.

Everybody is working hard to deliver the best that we can in this emergency situation. We are fortunate that our day to day approach to technology and the iPad scheme places us in a stronger position than most in regards to home learning. I believe the provision we are providing is towards the top end of what is being offered by state schools currently as we have elected to keep to our timetable, delivering 26 lessons a week to students in their class groups with the teacher who knows them best available online to help.

Thank you to all of the students who completed the online survey regarding teaching and learning and wellbeing. A summary of some of the questions can be seen below.

Have you been able to access work set in google classroom?

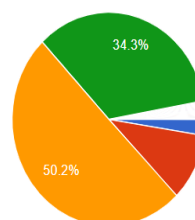
609 responses



● Yes
● No

On average, how many hours a day are spending on home learning tasks set by school?

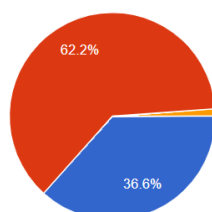
609 responses



● 0 - 1 hour
● 1 - 3 hours
● 3 - 5 hours
● 5 + hours
● Around 5 hours and 45 minutes
● I am spending the full time that we are..
● 4 hours
● The regular amount of time that I woul..
▲ 1/3 ▼

Overall, how would you rate the amount of work set by teachers for the lesson time ?

609 responses



● Too much
● About right
● Too little

Although 99% of students are able to access their work, we will continue to monitor and support those who are having difficulties. Please contact pjones@bohuntworthing.com if your child is unable to access their work.

Staff have completed some Loom training this week and hopefully your children have

benefitted from seeing and hearing instructions from their teachers. For the majority of students, the amount of work being set is about right. However, some feel like there's too much being set. Far fewer students feel not enough work is being set. We will continue to reflect on this and remind staff that students are not expected to complete as much in a home environment as they would at school.

When asked to comment on areas of home learning you feel are working well for you, students responded with the following comments:

- It's easy to access as it's all set in the morning therefore I have more free time when I finish it.
- I get more time to do work because I feel less distracted.
- Private messaging system works well for asking questions.
- I get to talk to my friends through FaceTime and I get my work done.
- I like knowing I can message the teacher if I need to for help and it keeps me busy.

When asked to comment on areas of home learning you feel could be improved, or support you feel you might need, students responded with:

- too much work in one lesson
- I feel that lesson to year 11s should be more based around careers and proceeding with further education. Also lessons around things such as real world tasks would be good such as managing money and finances for example.
- More feedback
- less work as it feels a lot more than what we would normally do in a lesson at school and we also don't have 1-1 help only over google classroom which isn't the same making the work feel even longer
- The explanation of a few lessons

We are responding to student feedback and will be sharing the findings with teaching staff to ensure we continue to reflect and improve on our remote curriculum.

TOP TIP: As a first step if a student is experiencing any difficulty or frustration with a piece of work please check they have engaged their classroom teacher for support. They are the person most able and best placed to resolve the issue and we are aware this is a step some students are reluctant to follow. Contacting them through the google classroom during the timetabled lesson slot or by email is the easiest way to do this.

Lexia Power-Up:

A reminder to all parents and students that Lexia PowerUp is accessible via the iPads. Download the app and achieve your minutes by completing the set tasks. This is designed to improve student literacy and is tailored to the student.

Year 9 and 10 students will receive their logins today (Friday 24th). Year 8 students will also be sent a login reminder.

You can also read more about Lexia PowerUp on our website:

<https://www.bohuntworthing.com/students/home-working-arrangements-during-school-closure/>

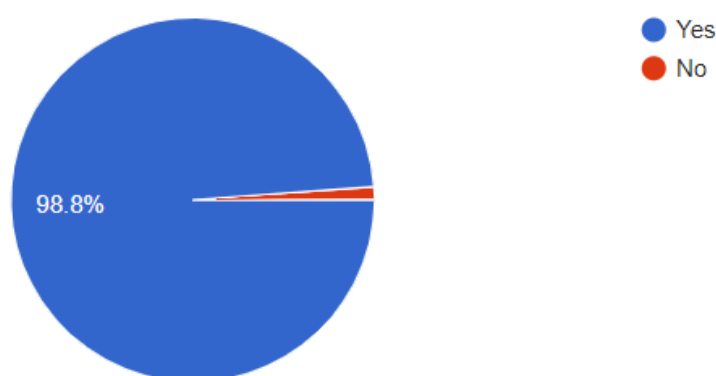
Pastoral Support and Student Wellbeing:

At the beginning of the week, tutors reached out to all students checking in how they were getting on during this time of great disconnect. Your son or daughter should be encouraged to maintain a dialogue with their tutor, in particular if they are experiencing concerns or anxieties with work or the wider situation we all face. Tutors will be able to give some support or sign post students to a member of staff who would be best placed to help that young person.

As a part of their activities on Monday, students completed a Wellbeing survey and the feedback from students demonstrates that the vast majority of students have adapted remarkably well to the changes that have been forced upon us. Below is a snapshot of the feedback.

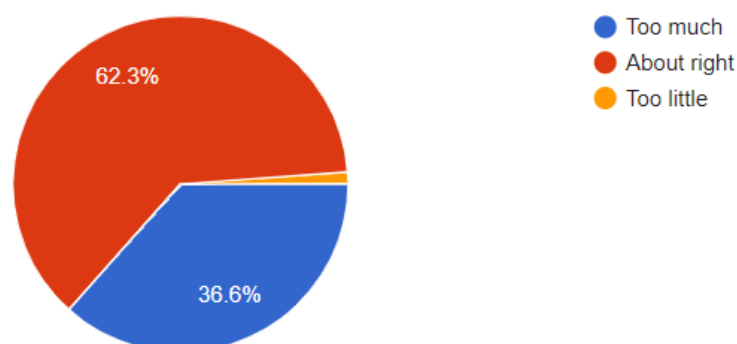
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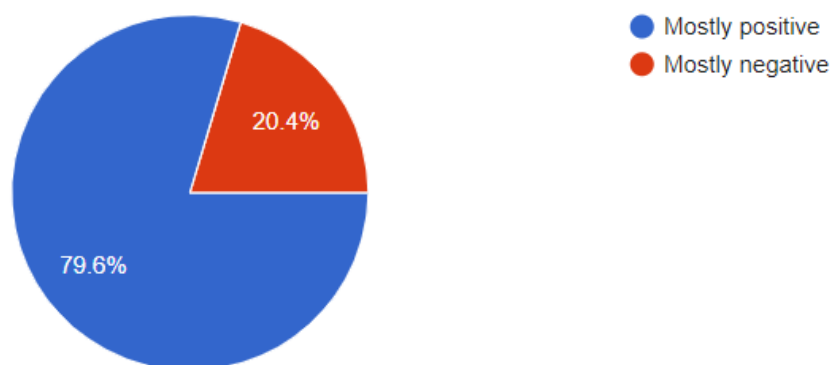
Overall, how would you rate the amount of work set by teachers for the lesson time ?

607 responses



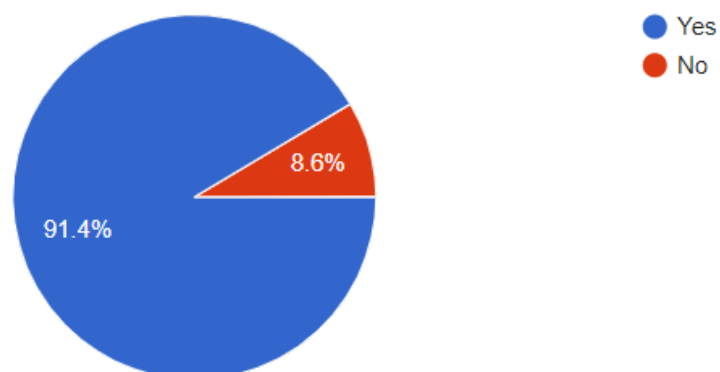
How would you describe your overall state of mind?

608 responses



Do you have someone to talk to if you feel low?

608 responses



We will continue to check in with students and engage with them pastorally, with a 'virtual assembly' and further contact from the school. As parents please feel free to get in touch if you feel we can support your son / daughter pastorally. In the first instance please email the tutor directly or contact info@bohuntworthing.com and request the email is directed to your son / daughter's tutor.