

Headteacher's End of Term Update - Friday 18th December 2020

This week's update includes: *reflections on a unique year: reminder about track and trace; possible mass testing after Christmas; Year 11 GCSE Exams; Golden Ticket Winner; Design and technology Christmas projects; Manchester United Foundation activities and hampers; Excellence in Mathematics; Year 11 GCSE Drama monologues; Changes to Year 8; Thank you to Werneth staff; Academisation - A New Chapter in 2021*

There is no doubt in educational circles – as in probably most of our lives – that 2020 has been a **memorable year for all of the wrong reasons**. I think all of us in schools would judge it to be the strangest and most challenging year of our professional lives, and a year in which we have adapted in ways that we would have thought impossible this time last year. And yet, in a strange way, **it's also a year to look back on with pride**. We have all learnt a great deal about our perseverance and the things in life that really matter to us, and our young people have matured and shown great resilience throughout. I think our school community has emerged stronger as a result of the compassion and teamwork that has been demonstrated, and I look forward to the new challenges of 2021 with a sense of optimism and excitement.

One of the strangest aspects of the whole situation has been the unpredictability of every day, with our **track and trace** in school leading to groups of various sizes isolating. I don't pretend to understand the patterns, but the first half term was extremely disruptive with over 90% of our students needing to isolate at some point over that period. This half term has been the opposite, with no groups needing to isolate at all. We came back from half term with almost half of the school isolating, but this has reduced to fewer than 1% of our school isolating this week. A reminder that we will continue to **contact trace from Monday 21st up to and including Christmas Eve**, and the systems for this were sent to parents this week ... you can see those still on our website under *Recent News*.

You will likely have heard of a **new mass testing system for pupils and staff in secondary schools**, launching by the government in January. This morning (Friday) I have had confirmation of how this will work. **Everyone** will return to school on 11th January, and the government will be delivering kits and training modules for our staff to use during that week. We will then aim to set up a testing station for our pupils and staff, who will be tested every week. This will allow us to keep everyone safe. In order for us to test your child, we will need you to complete a parental consent form. We will be providing copies of this on 11th January to send home for you to fill in and return.

Year 11 Summer GCSE Examinations - The latest information from the government is that the main examinations will run from Wed 26th May (English Language) until Friday 2nd July. The final exam is a Science/Physics exam and all students will have an exam on this day. You should also be aware that practical exams may take place earlier than this and that - if there is any disruption to the main exam period, caused by Covid, it is possible that exams may continue beyond July 2nd. **Please do not book any holidays during this period.**

We have tried hard this week to maintain work and study up to and including Thursday, whilst also recognising the excitement and achievement of our students as we approach Christmas.

- There have been many rewards in place this week for outstanding work this term. We are always conscious as a school that we would like to increase the rewards for the many students who are consistently excellent ambassadors for our school, their families and themselves. This term Mr



Bennett has introduced a new “Golden Ticket” system to our rewards. Students were given a Golden Ticket by their teachers, and entered into this draw for excellent work, 100% attendance, no behaviour logs or excellent representation of the school. I selected the winning number on Thursday, and Ellis in 7R was the lucky winner of a Lenovo Chromebook. Next half term we will reset the draw and again

all students will have the chance of winning a brand new chromebook.

- Miss Smith’s Year 10 Design & Technology students designed the wooden decorations for our school Christmas tree this year. They were learning about scales of production and this task helped them to engage with batch production.



Each student used CAD/ CAM to design and make them. They were drawn using 2D Design drawing package and then cut out using the laser cutter. The students really enjoyed making them and they add a personalised touch to the Werneth tree. Thanks for all your hard work year 10!

- Mr Brighton was very pleased this week to reward eighty eight students in year eleven for their exceptional performance in the maths mock exams. Despite disruption to their education they have shown the fortitude and incredible work ethic required to either achieve or be on track to exceed their target grade. The rewards are acknowledgement of their outstanding achievement
- Year 10 Catering and Food Technology students have been making their Christmas cakes this week. This annual event, judged by Mrs Hunt, comes under fierce scrutiny with students working extremely hard to achieve the best cake. This year’s winners were Adam Khan 10A Catering; Elyce Pearson 10A Food; Lara Wilkinson 10B Food; Lucy-Liu Rothwell 10B Catering



- I was privileged to watch some of our Year 11 students performing their **GCSE Drama monologue** pieces to camera this week. Outstanding performances from all of them, and they are destined for the very highest grades. Well done to our Year 11 students, and to Mrs Brothers in Drama.

- Phil McGrath, our Manchester United Foundation Hub Officer updated me on two key areas this week:
 - **Christmas Card Competition** - The Year 7 students had the opportunity to enter a Manchester United Foundation Christmas Card competition. The entries were very impressive, and one of our Werneth pupils finished in the top 3 across all the MU Foundation partner schools. All those students who entered should be very proud of their work.
 - **Shoebox Project** - On Thursday 17th December, we dropped off numerous shoeboxes, completed and filled by our wonderful students, to a local charity, The Cherry Tree Project. They were very grateful to receive these, and wanted to thank the Werneth community for the generosity shown by our families.



- I would also like to thank the Manchester United Foundation on behalf of Werneth School for their support in funding Christmas Hampers for 52 of our families who need some support over the Christmas period. These will be handed out today, and again on 28th December by Werneth staff. We are also donating 96 hampers to the Cherry Tree project in Romiley. [Picture is of Phil McGrath and governor Mr McAllister].

Year 8 pupils and parents - Mrs Knee is leaving us today for a year out as she explores some new opportunities. She will be back in January 2022. In the meantime, we have appointed Mrs Arnold who joins us from a school in Oldham as the new Year Inclusion Manager for Year 8 working alongside Mr Mujagic and Mrs Kennedy.

I would like to end by recognising the diligence and resilience of Werneth staff over the course of this term. It's been a personal challenge but I have never had to consider closing the school due to staff shortages. They have persevered and managed to juggle the demands of students in school, whilst also setting work for children who are at home. I know parents have been very grateful for these efforts, and I would like to thank parents and carers for your support of school over the whole of this year.

We return as planned on Monday 11th January 2021. This will be a RED week. When we return, a reminder that Werneth School will have become an academy, and will have joined the **Education Learning Trust**. This takes effect on 1st January 2021. I anticipate that I will be able to update parents with the **calendar dates for the 2021/22 academic year in January**.



***Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year break,
and we look forward to seeing you all back in school in January.***