

LWO / GPA

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Alec Hunter Wellbeing ‘Catch Up & Grow’ Week**

We hope you are all well and keeping safe during this second national lockdown. We have been very impressed with so many of our students who have been working extremely hard throughout this half term to keep up with their remote learning.

Thank you so much to those of you who completed our recent remote education survey. We value your views immensely and it has helped us to continue to evaluate and reshape our remote provision. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly very positive from parents and students and we are delighted that our new approach to remote learning in 2021 has been engaging and supportive to our students at home. However, we do recognise that every child is different, and whilst some students have adapted extremely well to these circumstances, others have struggled with learning independently and, for a range of reasons, have found difficulty in organising themselves and staying on top of the workload. Some students suggested via the survey that they are thirsty for deeper or more varied learning, whilst other students and parents felt that we have provided too much work and it is unmanageable.

We would like to reassure students and parents that we do not expect students to be working late into the night to complete their remote learning. We believe it will help students if they can get into a routine and follow their timetable as best as they can, which is why we have timetabled our live lessons and assignments to be scheduled around the times that lessons would usually take place if we were in school. In addition, staff are doing their best to plan the right amount of learning for students to complete at home, however, this is difficult to judge because this style of learning is new to all of us, and we recognise that students work at different paces. Therefore, staff are encouraging students to submit their work by the end of the lesson (or within 48 hours at the latest) so that they do not get too far behind. Students are also being set challenge tasks as extensions to learning and we would encourage students, who complete work before the end of the lesson, to attempt the challenge tasks which are designed to boost their understanding and skills.

With a view to supporting the needs and wellbeing of all our young people, we have decided that the final week of this half term will include some time for students either to catch up with their learning (if they are behind) or to spend some time ‘growing’, by exploring a range of different activities (if they are up to date). Therefore, from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February, students will engage with their normal, scheduled lessons during Periods 1-4 **only** and Period 5 each day will become time to ‘Catch Up or Grow’. Our teaching staff will not set new assignments during Period 5 lessons in that week, but they will be contactable online in Teams instead to support any students who may need help to catch up with overdue tasks. Students can either email their teachers or write them a message in the Posts section for their class team. As we are providing this time in the curriculum for those who are behind to catch up, it is our expectation that by the time we return after February half-term break, all students will be completely up to date with their learning and ready to start the next half term without any backlog of outstanding work.

For those students who are already up to date, we will publish a menu of 'Growth' Tasks from each subject department before Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February from which students may select activities to complete at their own discretion and according to their own interests. Most of these tasks will be more creative or inventive than normal but will provide opportunities for students to study in different ways or develop new skills in topics they enjoy. If, however, your child(ren) wishes to use this time to improve their personal wellbeing by undertaking activities, with your approval, that they do not normally have a chance to enjoy whilst learning at home, then we would encourage this too. We understand that there are great benefits to computers and the internet, and our current learning model would be impossible without them, but we also recognise that a break from the screen can be beneficial, and we hope that this dedicated wellbeing time will support that.

During this week, Tutorial Time on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be slightly different. We will not prepare a reflection or an assembly as normal, but instead tutors will lead a discussion session in which students can talk about their wellbeing, tell others about some of the activities they have been undertaking during Catch Up and Grow Week and share positive stories of kindness they have seen since the start of Lockdown. Some of the feedback we have received from parents indicates that certain students would benefit from being able to see their friends' faces on Teams and therefore this week, we will be trialling the use of optional 'cameras on' during these live meetings in tutorial only, to give students some virtual face-to-face time with their tutors and peers. We will not record these tutorial sessions and would request that students blur their backgrounds if they wish to have their cameras on. Please note that turning cameras on during live meetings uses up a lot more mobile data than 'cameras off', and therefore students should only opt to do this in tutorial if they are using wi-fi or have a good supply of mobile data.

If you have any questions about our approach, please do not hesitate to contact me and I should like to wish all our families a safe and productive end to what has been an extraordinary half term.

Kind regards,



Miss Woolnough  
Assistant Headteacher