



## GEP ACADEMIES WEEKLY BULLETIN

### WEEK COMMENCING 9th NOVEMBER 2020

#### Reminders for this coming week:

##### **GEP/AST JOINT EXECUTIVE MEETING**

09.11.20  
10.00 - 11.30

##### **GLAC CHAIRS MEETING**

10.11.20  
16.30 – 18.00

#### Forthcoming meetings:

##### **GLAC CHAIRS MEETING**

10.11.20  
16.30 – 18.00

##### **PAY COMMITTEE**

17.11.20  
16.30 – 18.00

##### **GEP/AST ALL HEADS MEETING**

19.11.20  
08.00 – 11.30

##### **AST/GEP JOINT DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEETING**

20.11.20  
08.30 – 10.00

##### **TRUSTEES & GLAC CHAIRS**

23.11.20  
16.30 - 18.30

#### **Uniform fireworks lack splendour**

In the November darkness the sight of fireworks can be uplifting, inspiring and transformational. The mass gatherings of yesteryear might not be with us this particular Autumn, but hopefully whether with cold face and soggy feet in your garden, or through your windows, patio doors and even skylights the spectacle of fireworks has illuminated your evenings over the last week.

We may be reflecting more on celebration, presidential success, or religious festival more than giving a 'penny for the guy' these days, but it is in the variety that fireworks become majestic. I have yet to witness a firework display of uniformity. A firework celebration that only has 'purple rockets' is great... but after the fourth rocket we tend to lose interest. This is why from the bangers to the sparklers, from the catherine wheels to the fountains, from the rockets to the roman candles, it is the variety which delights. White lights mix with reds, greens, crackles, sparkles, bangs and pops... often all at once. Firework displays are now choreographed with music, water and dance... what does this tell us about our educational world.

Our schools, indeed lessons and children all benefit from variety. We are not a trust which prescribes and celebrates only one type of rocket (however lovely that rocket may be). It is our variety and celebration of all that provides us with strength. The educational debate is sometimes polarised between 'progressive' and 'traditionalist' approaches to learning – this polarisation causes damage in my view. The wonderful challenge of teaching is that your class changes. It changes in what it needs from year to year, lesson to lesson, subject to subject, within class and out of class – this is why our preparation is so tiring! It is not simply the case of doing the same things again... sending up the same white rocket because it worked last week, yesterday or last term. A uniform approach or one single silver bullet towards success does not exist. It is in our variety and ability to adapt to our children's needs that allows us to be successful.

Education is about preparing minds for reflection, adaption, consideration and adjustment. Encouraging individual thought, opinion and learning. Yes, of course we identify universal truths, theorems and knowledge and will continue to do so, but the historical view of learning is one that changes. Yesterday's certainty becomes today's doubts and tomorrow's misinterpretations. This is knowledge and learning. This is the scientific method. A range of voices, a range of teachers, styles, schools and children make up the majesty of our profession.

Like a great firework display, it is in the variety that we see splendour.

## **Actions for Heads:**

### **Please make your staff aware of the offer below**

The supermarket Morrisons are offering a 10% discount to all school staff from today 2<sup>nd</sup> November until Christmas. This is as a thank you for looking after the nation's children and supporting them through the pandemic. Click [here](#) to find your nearest Morrisons.

Details of the offer and terms and conditions are available [here](#).

## **Actions for Governors and Trustees:**

Trustees, please [click here](#) to read an advice note from Browne Jacobson entitled COVID-19: School Re-opening – Personal Liability of Academy Trust Directors which outlines the legal liabilities of trustees in relation to health and safety.

Don't forget to register to attend the upcoming training session [premises and buildings, school estate management](#) on Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 6.30pm. The training will be online and there is no charge for GEP governors and trustees.

You can also view other GEP/AST upcoming training [sessions by clicking here](#).

## **School Improvement Update:**

### **Festival of Learning**

BlueSky Learning have coordinated an online Festival of Learning which will be running from 17<sup>th</sup> November through to 1<sup>st</sup> December. It is completely free to sign up and is open to all. It is aimed at trainee and early career teachers and mentors. Sessions include:

- How to build motivation for learning
- Outlook is more than an email app
- Support for New Teachers – Why it Matters
- Resilience and Robustness: Curriculum in the time of Covid-19 with CST's Steve Rollett
- Voice Matters
- The essential elements of planning and teaching

[Click here to sign up](#).

### **Anna Freud Centre Anti-bullying toolkit**

There is now an anti-bullying toolkit available published by the Anna Freud Centre to mark Anti-Bullying week which commences next Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November. There are many useful resources and tips available to schools within the toolkit such as posters, powerpoint presentations and videos. Please click [here](#) for the toolkit or go to the [Mentally Healthy Schools website](#), owned by the Anna Freud Centre for more information.

## **School Operations:**

### **GEP Network Team Update**

This month we have been able to focus on quality of life changes and although these are not dramatic changes, they make a big difference to staff and students in our schools. Some recent examples of this:

- Fullbrook projector remotes – it was becoming frustrating for teachers at Fullbrook to walk into a room and the projector remote be missing. We have now invested in a projector remote for every

- single member of staff, ensuring that lessons are no longer delayed waiting for the projector to turn on.
- Fullbrook Home Learning restructure – we have recently setup a remote learning area on the Fullbrook Student Learning Environment (Microsoft SharePoint) to enable staff to share lessons and resources with students should either need to learn/work from home. This has been personalised to each subject to ensure an effective structure is in place and easy to use.
  - Kings new classroom layout – Kings has a classroom that is long and thin, this meant that if a student sat at one side of the room they couldn't easily see the presentation or whiteboard. We have now installed two cost effective TV screens at either side of the room and purchased a larger and more central whiteboard. This combined with a wireless keyboard and mouse, now allows every student to see and for the teacher to move around the long classroom seamlessly to assist students.
  - George Abbot Staff Hub – the George Abbot Staff Hub based on Microsoft SharePoint, is being prepared as the new staff shared area for George Abbot. As Microsoft SharePoint is cloud storage this will ensure that George Abbot's data will be more accessible and user friendly due to it being integrated with Office 365 within school and at home. We will also be providing this to our other schools soon.
  - Loseley Fields IT room revamp – the Loseley IT room has been audited, older and damaged equipment removed and the room looks fantastic to show off and ready for the new Loseley virtual tour, please see the Loseley website for the virtual tour.

### **Virtual Prospective Parents Evenings**

Parent virtual events have been running for the last 2 months to keep current parents informed about student progress and to show our fantastic schools to prospective parents. One recent parents' evening at Loseley Fields had a presentation from Amanda Pedder, a question and answer session hosted by Joe Bibby with multiple staff called on to answer questions on camera and a live chat function running throughout the event for parents to discuss and ask questions. Feedback was fantastic from prospective parents, please see the Loseley website for details on their "Open Week" which includes the recording of the event.

### **Guildford Grove New Website**

At the time of writing this, we have just configured the domain name for Guildford Grove to point at the brand-new Guildford Grove website. We are now waiting for the new details to be sent across the internet and I hope by the time this reaches you the new website will be live. This means that we have designed and launched two new websites this term, Kings College and Guildford Grove, as well as redesigning the GEP homepage layout. This work has all been completed within the GEP Network Team without the need to pay costly external web-designers.

### **Microsoft Teams Integration and Training**

We are progressing with implementing Microsoft Teams in our schools, we recently had an external provider give two free training sessions to our schools, please see below if you missed the training:

[Microsoft Teams Training Link](#)

If you would like a member of the Network Team to provide virtual training to your school/department please let us know and we will setup a time that suits. I will also be providing training virtually on the January 4th INSET day at 10:00, please let me know if you would like your school to join this INSET training.

### **Helpdesk Update**

In October, the helpdesk team received a total of 914 opened tickets and closed a total of 985. With a decrease in the number of opened tickets since September, it allows the team to focus on more complex projects and tasks requested this term.

September's requests were heavily focused on classroom audio visual and online services, in October the focus has changed to staff devices and staff system/software requests. This meant that the Network team designed, edited and installed software and systems such as Microsoft SharePoint as well as providing training and support for staff to use these systems.

As always, we please ask that you log any issues or queries in helpdesk by emailing:  
[networkhelpdesk@gepacademies.com](mailto:networkhelpdesk@gepacademies.com)

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### Jack's visits and meetings this week:

<b>AST/GEP Joint executive meeting</b>	<b>09.11.20</b>	<b>10.00 – 11.30</b>
<b>Maths School meeting</b>	<b>09.11.20</b>	<b>14.00 – 15.30</b>
<b>Guildford Healthcare project meeting</b>	<b>09.11.20</b>	<b>16.00 – 17.00</b>
<b>Loseley Fields virtual school visit</b>	<b>10.11.20</b>	<b>14.00 – 15.00</b>
<b>Meeting with GLACs</b>	<b>10.11.20</b>	<b>16.30 – 18.00</b>
<b>1:1 with GEP Vice-Chair</b>	<b>11.11.20</b>	<b>12.00 – 13.00</b>
<b>Meeting with Diocese</b>	<b>12.11.20</b>	<b>09.30 – 11.00</b>
<b>Meeting with Miranda Brockman Coaching</b>	<b>12.11.20</b>	<b>11.30 – 13.00</b>
<b>Boxgrove virtual school visit</b>	<b>12.11.20</b>	<b>13.30 – 14.30</b>
<b>1:1 with GEP Director of Secondary Education</b>	<b>13.11.20</b>	<b>08.30 – 09.30</b>
<b>GEP Exec team meeting</b>	<b>13.11.20</b>	<b>10.00 – 12.00</b>
<b>Director of Education PM</b>	<b>13.11.20</b>	<b>12.00 – 13.30</b>
<b>Governance framework meeting</b>	<b>13.11.20</b>	<b>15.30 – 16.30</b>