



## GEP ACADEMIES WEEKLY BULLETIN WEEK COMMENCING 15 March 2021

### Reminders for this coming week:

#### **EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

16.03.21  
18.00 – 19.00

### Forthcoming meetings:

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST COMMITTEE**

20.04.21  
09.30 – 11.00

#### **GEP/AST JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

28.04.21  
08.00 – 10.00

#### **TRUST ACTION COMMITTEE**

29.04.21  
Time tbc

#### **AST/GEP JOINT HEADS MEETING**

20.05.21  
Time TBC

#### **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

20.05.21  
13.00 – 15.30

#### **GEP/AST JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

09.06.21  
08.00 – 10.00

#### **GEP ALL HEADS**

15.06.21  
TIME TBC

### **A note from Andrew Roach, GEP Director of Education**

I think I have finally decided, rather than skiing in Val d'Isere for the afternoon, I would sail around Ithaca before afternoon tea at Claridges.



Let me explain ... there used to be a regular section in my Saturday paper where celebrities would set out their ideal day and where they would like to be during the day from breakfast through to lunch and onwards until they decided where they would watch the sun set, have dinner and rest their head at the end of their perfect day.

How a year can change these expectations.

Whilst we are emerging from lockdown, our priorities perhaps have been reversed and we do not mind what we do as long as it is not another Zoom meeting, not another muddy dog walk and not another trip to Little Waitrose! It is also now much more about the opportunity to do something with our dearest friends and shared with our wider family. Time with others now seems much more important than what we might actually do and where we might do it. Time itself has become the valued commodity.

I try to keep up-to-date with what schools are doing by looking at their various daily and weekly tweets. If I had read the Tweets written by schools this week but sent out 18 months ago, I am sure I would have felt that our expectations had been significantly lowered and that we were struggling to find worthwhile things to say.

Tweets sent welcoming back Year 4 to school would not have been heralded and celebration that it had been a great day would not normally have been considered worth sharing. Similarly, secondary schools would not usually proudly announce to followers that Year 9 pupils had all been tested and that all was well. However, we all know that this past week has been far from familiar and usual.



They have been amazing as has everybody that has worked in support of the testing schedule. We have completed one week of two! Big tick ✓. Special thanks to Sarah N, Polly J, Sarah J, Nigel N, Gary R, 'Testing Sally' (Sally Smith who you will all have met in the Gym!), our HoYs and the many support staff that have made operations possible.



The lengths that schools have gone to in order to make pupils from nursery aged children to young adults in Year 13 feel welcome and safe have been extraordinary. Reinforcing a sense of belonging has been a priority for us all. I am also aware of the lengths that you have all gone to in order to support one another. It is testament to each of you, to our profession and a real reflection of our schools; thank you.

I once heard someone describe schools as 'buildings with tomorrow inside'; a phrase I have never forgotten. Looking after and nurturing that future is more important than ever. Wherever your role might sit in building that future; thank you for your care, selfless effort and professionalism.

#### **Actions for Heads:**

The next Joint AST/GEP heads meeting will take place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March from 9.30am to 11.30am. Agenda and papers can be found [here](#).

For those who have not already done so, please contact Gaby to arrange a time for Jack to attend a staff meeting week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> March or 22<sup>nd</sup> March to answer any merger questions.

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

##### **Next board meeting**

The board meeting scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup> has been cancelled.

##### **Safeguarding training**

The safeguarding training being run by Ruth Murton of [Leadershipwise](#) is taking place this evening. You can still [book your place](#).

The governors' conference that was planned for 15 March 2021 has been postponed. Governors will be notified when a new date has been set.

## School Improvement Update:

### **Mentally Healthy Schools – new resources from the Anna Freud Centre**

The Anna Freud Centre, has announced the expansion of [Mentally Healthy Schools](#), an information and resource hub offering free, quality-assured mental health resources and guidance specifically for secondary schools and further education colleges. This follows the success of its primary school resource, which has been accessed over 1 million times since its launch in March 2018.

The coronavirus pandemic and closure of schools has had a profound impact on children and young people's mental health. In England, the proportion of young people with a probable mental health disorder has risen to one in six in July 2020. The Anna Freud Centre surveyed over 3,000 young people in the UK aged between 11 and 19, asking about their mental health and wellbeing.

Findings include:

93% of young people want mental health to be brought into the classroom, and for conversations about mental health to be normalised.

- Over 92% of young people identify friendships as the main factor positively impacting their mental health.

Read the full report [here](#).

Surrey SLP are running a **Women in STEM** evening on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm via zoom. You will hear from two female speakers who have forged strong careers in the STEM world on what inspired them to follow their chosen path and how they got there followed by an opportunity to discuss what can be done to inspire more girls to continue with STEM subjects in further education. Please [click here to sign up to attend](#). Open to all teachers from across all phases.

## School Operations:

### **Finance System**

As merger consultation progresses the GEP and AST finance teams have been working together on the adoption of a single finance system across the proposed merged trust. We recognise that the finance system is one of the key (if hidden and not particularly glamorous!) building blocks of a successful trust, which is why this is one of the first areas in which we are looking to align. We are also aware that at least one of the current trusts will need to change systems and that this will entail a considerable amount of work and planning. Preparations are starting early to ensure we choose a system that we can implement efficiently and effectively, once a final decision on merger has been made, the key aim being to choose a system that works for our schools. To support this aim, a focus group has been formed consisting largely of School Business Managers and staff from the central finance teams, with the opportunity to feed into the process being given to all staff involved in finance.

### **Local Financial Reporting**

The central finance team have also been working with School Business Managers to implement a new local monthly Financial Report, in order to enhance the information provided to both GLAC's and Head Teachers. The aim of the report being to widen the financial information provided on a monthly basis to extend to reserves, enhanced KPI monitoring, capital budgets and balance sheet reporting, as well as creating a less manual report to make the production of monthly financial reporting in schools more efficient. These reports will be in use from March month end.

### **Banking Project**

During January and February a team of finance staff across the trust have been looking at banking. The project being formed of three strands: i) banking provider, ii) investment management, iii) the potential to move to a trust-wide banking model. In line with good financial management, GEP have undertaken an

assessment of its current banking provider, to establish whether there is a business case to switch to a new provider, or whether there are opportunities to enhance the services currently provided. Following rigorous review, the team agreed that our current provider provides a low cost solution that meets all of our banking needs, although opportunities were identified both to address additional banking costs identified in one school and to seek improvements to customer service. These areas are therefore now being addressed. Processes and procedures have also been developed to enable schools and the centre to invest its surplus cash, once Bank of England base rates bounce back. The final project strand, being the potential to move to a trust-wide banking model is now being taken forward post merger.

**Contacts:**

Jack Mayhew: CEO	jmayhew@gepacademies.com	01483 888188
Ali Larcombe-Fish: COO	alfish@gepacademies.com	01483 888022
Andrew Roach: Education Director	aroach@gepacademies.com	01483 888047
Lisa Wilde: Financial Controller	Lwilde@gepacademies.com	01483 888022
Lyndsay Cameron: SCITT Director	Lcameron@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk	01483 888070
Jo Coles: HR Manager	jcoles@gepacademies.com	01483 888074
Richard Wiseman: Estates Manager	rwiseman@gepacademies.com	01483 888007
Ben Sayers: Head of IT	bsayers@gepacademies.com	01483 484837
Gary Lelliott: Head of Governance	glelliott@gepacademies.com	01483 888007
Jackie Blackwood: Teaching School Manager	jblackwood@gepacademies.com	01483 888047
Graham Tuck: Director of Secondary Education (school improvement)	gtuck@gepacademies.com	
Kathryn Krynicki: Director of Primary Education (school improvement)	kkrynicki@gepacademies.com	
Carol Pearce: Primary SIP	Cpearce@athenaschools.co.uk	
Jane Abbott: Secondary SIP	jane@ascentia.org.uk	
Gaby Sutton: Senior Administrator/PA to CEO	gsutton@gepacademies.com	01483 888188

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

Loseley Fields mid-year appraisal	15.03.21	14.00 – 15.00
Kings Question and Answer forum	16.03.21	08.00 – 08.30
Kings Half termly review	16.03.21	08.30 – 10.30
Boxgrove mid-year review	16.03.21	11.30 – 12.30
Surrey Maths School meeting	16.03.21	12.30 – 13.30
Extraordinary Resources committee	16.03.21	18.00 – 19.00
Loseley Fields staff meeting drop in	17.03.21	15.30 – 16.00
Boxgrove staff meeting drop in	17.03.21	16.15 – 16.30
GEP/AST All heads meeting	18.03.21	09.30 – 11.30
Director of Education mid-year review	18.03.21	12.30 – 13.30
Chief Operating Officer mid-year review	18.03.21	14.00 – 15.00
NW Surrey Short Stay school	18.03.21	16.30 – 17.30
Joint Shadow Board meeting	19.03.21	08.30 – 10.00
Exec team meeting	19.03.21	10.00 – 12.00
Sandfield mid-year review	19.03.21	14.00 – 15.00
Guildford Grove Question and Answer forum	19.03.21	15.30 – 16.00