

Tuesday 14 November 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Person(s) with Parental Responsibility,

This letter is to update you on the school's Chromebook Provision, thank you for your continued support and helpful feedback, update you on some staffing issues and invite you to write some thank you messages for staff.

Chromebooks - Good news for those that need these devices the most

The school provides Chromebooks for students because we know this enhances teaching and learning, increases access to digital technology for those in our school community who might not otherwise have access to their own device, increases the access to resources for independent learning to stretch and support our students and contributes to us being an environmentally sustainable school.

In July we recalled all our school chromebooks for an audit and upgrade and this resulted in a need to review our universal provision of chromebooks for all students. I am pleased to let you know that we are now able to issue Chromebooks to approximately 75% of our students based on the following priorities :

Priority Group 1 - All students eligible for Pupil Premium, Children who are Looked After and students with SEND will be provided a chromebook for use at home and school. This will ensure they have access to a device to support their learning, complete homework and independent study.

Priority Group 2 - All Year 10 and Year 11 will be provided with a chromebook for use at home and at school. This will support their independent learning, revision and preparation for GCSE examinations.

Priority Group 3 - Any other students identified by our Year Team

The chromebooks will remain school property and students will be required to return the device in good working condition at the end of Year 11. Students will be expected to bring their device to school everyday for use in lessons as and when directed by staff. Students will be required to sign the Chromebook Agreement to indicate their commitment to using the device for their learning and following all the school guidance on online safety.

If your daughter is not in one of these priority groups she will still have excellent access to technology in school. The school has class sets of chromebooks for use in lessons, as directed by the class teacher, and there are plenty of desktop computers and chromebooks in the Learning Hub for students to use for independent learning before, during and after school. Our IT team are preparing the chromebooks and will begin issuing these to students over a two week period starting on Friday 17 November 2023.

Thank you for your continued support - you are appreciated and your feedback is valued

Thank you for your on-going support of school events. It was great having so many of you attend our recent Black History Month Celebration, Year 7 Celebration of Learning and Year 11 Exam Preparation Evening and Post-16 fayre. Students take great pride in sharing their achievements with you and your attendance at events like this is important and appreciated. It was also nice to talk to many of you myself and hear, first hand, about the things you like about the school- our curriculum, the quality of teaching, pastoral support and opportunities the school gives your daughter.

Fundraising in response to the situation in the Middle East

Last week student leaders worked with staff to deliver an assembly to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on Remembrance Day and the war in the Middle East. Students have written messages of peace for a school display and have been reminded of who they can talk to in school if they want support. This week we will be organising a voluntary charity collection for Action Aid because our students are keen, as global citizens, to do something to help those suffering as a result of this conflict.

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Staff recruitment and wellbeing

As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, feedback from parents and carers is appreciated . I am grateful to those of you who take time to share your experiences of the school and I always take any issues or concerns you raise seriously as part of my role to lead improvement in the school. Of course issues are often resolved quickly by contacting the relevant person in school by phone or email or by dropping in to school to speak to the member of senior staff on duty. However, if there was ever a need to raise a more serious concern, I would like to remind you that you can email me directly and or follow the NCL Trust Complaints Policy which can be found linked on our school website .

The wellbeing of our staff is very important to our school and there are a number of things in place to make sure our staff enjoy their role at Sarah Bonnell. Appreciation is one of the things that motivates people and promotes wellbeing. People at Sarah Bonnell are proud to work in a school that enables students to be ambitious, confident and achieve great results. They work hard to give your daughter the very best experience of school and I am inviting you to send a message of thanks via the following email so that I can share these messages with them and give their wellbeing a boost: staffthankyou@sarahbonnell.ncltrust.net .

As many of you will know from the national teacher strikes last year and from reports in the media, there is a national shortage of people who wish to work in education. The government has not reached its targets for recruiting graduates into teacher training and schools nationally are facing challenges in filling vacancies especially in subjects like Science, Maths, Languages. Like many other schools across the country, Sarah Bonnell School is also affected by this and we currently have three short-term vacancies in Science and Maths. I am sharing this information with you so that you understand how the school manages staff vacancies. The current vacancies have been successfully filled with specialist agency staff and our permanent staff have put in place any additional support needed to maintain high standards. In addition to this school leaders have reviewed timetables to ensure all students experience a balance of teaching from permanent science teachers and agency colleagues. This approach also includes prioritising the timetables for students in Year 11 and Year 10 who are preparing for their GCSEs examinations. We will continue to monitor teaching and learning in these subject areas. Longer term, the NCL Trust, which Sarah Bonnell School belongs to, is establishing its own Teacher Training School which will recruit and train a pool of teachers for our schools. If you know graduates, especially in English, maths, science, languages, who are interested in a career in teaching then please direct them to our website to find out more.

School telephone line - reducing wait times

I would like to inform you that we have recently increased the number of phone lines that are able to receive in-coming calls. This should reduce the wait times when phoning the school and get callers connected and/or transferred more quickly to someone who can deal with their enquiry.

Dates to note

School is **closed** for all students on **Friday 24 November 2023** due to staff training. All teaching staff and support staff in the Newham Community Learning Trust will be involved in professional training to further improve provision for students with Special Educational Needs.

Our next school event is on **Wednesday 13 December 2023** when we will be performing our annual school drama performance. This year students are performing the '**Sarah Bonnell Gothic Tales**' - tickets are on sale now!

Finally, a very Happy Diwali to those in our community who celebrated this festival of light over the weekend.

Yours faithfully,



Ms Rae Potter - **Headteacher**

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