

Virtual welcome for pupils

CHILDREN moving to secondary school in September are meeting their teachers, buying their uniform and learning about their new subjects – all via the internet.

With schools closed to the majority of students until after the summer break, the transition of Year 6 children into their first year at secondary has had to be adapted.

Those due to join Year 7 in September are already in regular contact with Burnt Mill Academy, in Harlow.

Dan Bolt, assistant headteacher, said: "Myself and other heads of year are having conversations with each other every day and are in contact with our students every two weeks, at least. That has been going on for weeks to see how they are doing during the partial closure of school. We are trying to support our students as much as we can as so many things can be impacting their mental health right now."

School council sets out its action plan for next year

Students and teachers work together to improve year-old school



The school council at Sir Frederick Gibberd College, in Harlow, met online for their final meeting of the school year.

By Lewis Berrill

SCHOOL councillors have not let lockdown get in the way of their mission.

The school council at Sir Frederick Gibberd College, in Harlow, met online for their final meeting of the school year.

The Gibberd Council has put together an action plan for September, listing the ways they want to develop the one-year-old school further.

Headteacher Dee Conlon said: "They have told us how they feel the first year of Sir Frederick Gibberd College has gone, what they like, what they want to work on, their favourite and least favourite parts of the school.

"The councillors act as the voice of their peers.

"They know best the views of the children of Sir Frederick Gibberd College.

"We have worked together to create a plan for September."

Students have asked to know more about what Year 8 will look like for them, for more enrichment activities and to spend more time with their teachers as they have missed them in lockdown.

Mrs Conlon said: "This was an opportunity for me to get their point of view, to find out what it has been like for them and how they feel it is going.

"I wanted to know what they had enjoyed, so we can continue with it next year.

"It is their school, so they should have a voice. They tell the truth, but in a very mature and sensible manner.

"I do not promise them they will get everything they want, but it is giving them the opportunity to express their views.

"This is democracy in action. They need to see from leaders

that they are being listened to. If we do not listen to what our children tell us now, they will not learn that their opinions matter.

"As a result, they will not speak when it matters later on in life.

"We want our children to be active citizens.

"We want them to know that they have a voice and that they can, in fact they must, use it.

"Our children will grow up to be active citizens and that is exactly what they are doing at school; being active in their immediate community."

Gibberd Council members, who were elected in September after campaigning for a week, have served a whole year.

They have actively represented the student body and visited the Houses of Parliament to learn more about the work of an MP, so they could understand their role better.

Don't miss out on vaccinations

HUNDREDS of babies are missing out on potentially life-saving vaccinations in Essex, with uptake remaining below the level the World Health Organisation says is needed for herd immunity.

The WHO recommends at least 95 per cent of newborns should get the jab, which protects against six serious infections including polio, whooping cough and diphtheria.

But just 94.6 per cent of infants born in Essex who had

their first birthday between January and March have been vaccinated, according to Public Health England data.

However, immunisation rates have increased from the previous quarter, when 94.4 per cent of babies were vaccinated.

But the Department of Health and Social Care said some people may have felt unsafe taking their baby during the coronavirus crisis, and it is working to address this.

Throughout lockdown, immunisation services have been prioritised by GP surgeries to ensure that children continue to receive the essential protection that vaccination confers.

If your child has missed one of their vaccinations, get in touch with your GP surgery and they can make a catch-up appointment for you.

It's never too late to protect your child from catching one of these nasty diseases.

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