

Lockdown One Year On: Haileybury Turnford school community has grown in strength despite challenges of Covid-19

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By [Charlotte Page](#)

Pictured above, Principal Robin Newman (left) receives Chromebooks from The Saracens Foundation which will make a huge difference to students

The past year has posed its challenges to school communities.

With just a small number of pupils in school, students and staff worked remotely as face-to-face teaching for the majority moved online and parents got to grips with home learning.

As part of Boris Johnson's first four-step plan to lift Covid-19 restrictions - young people made a welcome return to the classroom in early March.

Mr Johnson said the reopening of schools marked a "truly national effort to beat this virus". A mass testing scheme remains in place as a protective measure.

Robin Newman, principal of Haileybury Turnford in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, said: "It has been wonderful to have our students all back at school – they were really happy to be back."

Despite what has been a turbulent year, the school community has grown in strength, explained Mr Newman.

He said: “Throughout the pandemic, the Haileybury Turnford school community has grown in strength, despite the great challenges placed on students, families and staff.

“We have had more positive emails, comments and feedback than ever before, and the school community has shown a greater ability to support its community.

“This has been seen by the £5,000 which the community raised **to provide digital devices to those digitally disadvantaged students** and families, to enable students to learn remotely during lockdowns in the past 12 months.



”Students have made a welcomed return to the classroom (Credit: Haileybury Turnford)

The Saracens Foundation, the charitable arm of Saracens Rugby Club, recently donated a number of Chromebooks following a number of generous donations - which too will make a huge difference to Haileybury Turnford students.

Mr Newman said: “We were thrilled to receive 30 Chromebooks from Saracens Foundation which will make a huge difference to some of our students – thank you.”

The foundation works across Hertfordshire and North London to transform lives on and off the pitch by building strong communities.

Its programmes address specific social needs within the community by encouraging increased participation in sport and physical activity; breaking down barriers to participation for specific excluded groups, developing interventions to address health issues and developing pathways into education and employment.

Mr Newman continued: “Another striking example of the care for the most vulnerable families was seen by the £2,500 crowdfunding which took place at Christmas, to support the most vulnerable families with food during the festive period.

“We were humbled by the response from students, staff and families.”

Vice-principal Maxine Goodes added: “Throughout the pandemic, there has been a focus on supporting all students, providing academic support and high-quality face-to-face teaching as

well as remote teaching, whilst at the same time ensuring emotional and mental health support has been given to support those in need.”

During the past 12 months Haileybury Turnford has received awards for its support during the pandemic, including the **Kellogg’s East of England Breakfast Club of the Year**.

During the first national lockdown, the breakfast club continued to open for vulnerable students and school counsellors were on hand each day.

Breakfast club staff also created food parcels and delivered these to families throughout the lockdown period.

When allowed to reopen last September, the breakfast club provided each of its year group bubbles a breakfast bag and students were able to help themselves to food in the morning and return at any time during the day.



A student takes part in HT Challenge Day which reminded students of the importance of activities away from a screen (Credit: Haileybury Turnford)

Other awards won by Haileybury Turnford include the Safeguarding Alliance’s Safeguarding Initiative Award for the school’s work during Covid-19, Young Citizens’ SMSC prestigious Gold Award and the Pivotal Education Gold Behaviour Award.

“As we come out of the pandemic, it is an exciting time to be part of the Haileybury Turnford community,” said Mr Newman. “We have a brilliant staff team, working closely with students and families, providing the support and care they need.”

One parent, who clearly agreed, said: “As parents, we feel that you have really supported students and their families more than ever.”

Haileybury Turnford has lots to look forward to this year, including the opening of its new building in September.