

18 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

I hope that you and your families are all staying safe and well in these challenging times.

No doubt you will have read or heard in the news about the planned re-opening of schools from 1 June for certain age groups. We continue to monitor advice and guidance from the Department for Education, the Local Authority and liaise with other schools, particularly our feeder schools, who are facing the same challenges. You may have also seen on the news that unions have been working closely with the government seeking reassurance on the safety of returning to work. The government is due to review the latest science on 28 May. If that evidence does not support a return to school then it will be delayed.

I want to be very clear that the school does not want to put students, staff and their families at risk. This means all of us playing our part to keep ourselves and others protected. To that end we are in the process of risk assessing and planning the return of Year 10 in mid-June.

Years 7 - 9 will not be returning unless we are providing emergency childcare for children of key workers. They will continue their home learning activities. If you need some further guidance then please contact the subject teacher or form tutor for support in the first instance.

Monday 18 May – Friday 22 May

School is open for emergency childcare for key workers.

Tuesday 19 May to Wednesday 20 May – Year 10 Parental Survey This will now take place week commencing 1 June.

We are looking forward to welcoming our students back but parents and carers are better placed to know the risk and vulnerabilities within their families. The return to school is parent/carer choice and there will be no penalties for non-attendance before September. We do however need to know numbers so that we can plan safely and effectively and communicate with you accordingly.

If Year 10 do return there is no guarantee that they would be in school every day as a full year group until the end of term. The plan would be to provide some face to face contact and re-assurance in relation to wellbeing and academic studies going forward. They would not be returning to a normal teaching timetable. The same procedures for home learning activities will be in place.

Please complete the survey if you are the parent/carer of a Year 10 student. The survey will be sent to you by text by Tuesday 19 May. It will require you to respond with the following details:

1. Student Surname.
2. Student First Name.
3. Student Date of Birth.
4. Will your child in Year 10 be attending school from 15 June (Yes/No/Only if the school bus service is available).
5. If you do intend to send your child will they (bring a packed lunch/require a school lunch).
6. How will your child travel to school (Car/cycle/walk/intend to use school transport if available/na).

Once we have gathered the information we will write to you with firmer plans, this will be after 28 May.

Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May

The school will be closed for **all students** for the half term break. Students should not be completing learning activities this week.

Thursday 28 May

The government is due to review the latest scientific evidence for the re-opening of schools.

Monday 1 June – Friday 17 July

The school will be open for emergency childcare for children of key workers.

Monday 15 June

Provisional date for Year 10 to return (See details above).

Please note that in the original school calendar this was originally a training day.

Balancing home learning activities and wellbeing

All children across the nation are in exactly the same position and will have missed the best part of around 12 weeks of formal schooling by the time September comes. Schools have taken different approaches and styles to providing work for students. In an ideal world where everyone has access to the same electronic devices, high speed broadband, and confident academic/technological help at home then live/face to face lessons would be great. Unfortunately, that is not the case for every child and family. This will be explored more and if I am confident about safeguarding, protecting staff and students as well as GDPR we may start to do more in this way.

Students will catch up and this can be achieved. I am confident that the Department for Education and Examination Boards will take these extreme circumstances into consideration for testing over the next few years. That is the right thing to do and I do not want parents/carers unduly worried about what grades their children were getting before lockdown compared to what they think they might be now. We already have so much progress data and information about where students are and should be in terms of academic progress. The most important thing for when students return is their wellbeing. The work ethic of the staff and students will take care of the rest.

I completely appreciate that motivating your child to do their work can cause arguments and frustration. As a parent you are better placed to judge what is appropriate study time and what is not in your family. I would much prefer to know that families have struck a good balance between work and wellbeing, provided encouragement and reassurance to their children to try to alleviate any fears about COVID-19. When I go for walks I have noticeably seen more families out. I have noticeably seen empty shelves in the baking department of supermarkets. I have seen far more things on social media about mindfulness, wellbeing and exercise. These things are so important, as they are the here and now.

Year 6 Transition

Further information will be sent out by Mr Robertson who is leading on this. We are liaising with our feeder schools about our plans.

Year 9

Year 9 will be receiving a letter this week about options, with further details. Mr Linley is leading on this.

Year 11

As soon as we know more about GCSE grades and arrangements for Year 11 we will let you know. Your form tutor and Mr Barnes are still available if anyone needs any support. Mr Hough leads on careers and Post-16 destinations.

Sending you all my very best wishes on behalf of the staff of the school.

Kind regards



Lisa Fox
Headteacher