



17th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update

Since I last wrote to you we have continued to evolve our work in making opportunities for learning online. Staff are providing an increasing amount of live teaching and I think that what is being expected from our students is now more or less realistic. Certainly there is a steady flow of good quality work coming back to the school. Some of it you will have seen in the weekly gallery. We are carrying out a fortnightly review of individual students' responses; some letters as a result of that will be going out over the next few days.

Nationally, as you will be aware, there will be some changes to arrangements for schools after half term. Most of the discussion and controversy has been about children in primary schools. In the secondary sector we are being asked to focus upon year 10 and 12, ensuring that we provide some face-to-face support to those preparing for public exams in 2021. In an effort to prevent any confusion, I will set out for each year group the situation at the High School from 1st of June.

Year 12

There is already a successful pattern of online teaching, much of it includes opportunities for live engagement with specialist teachers. This will continue unchanged.

Year 10

In this year as well there is also a good programme of relevant lessons taught by specialist teachers. They are in the best position to provide individual support and the safest and most practical channel for doing this is through the lessons online.

This programme of lessons and contact, however, is not reaching every single member of year 10. In some cases this is because a student struggles with the technology. If your son or daughter is finding this a barrier he/she will given an appointment to come into school for a session of practice. (This will be concerned, I must stress, with the use of IT and not with the content of the lessons themselves. The member of staff offering help will not be the student's own teacher. I am anxious that this new opportunity does not pull teachers away from the regular online timetables.)

If you think that some support of this kind would clear the way for your son or daughter to make better use of what is offered, please ring the school or contact your son/daughter's Head of House by e-mail.

Year 8 & 9

For these two years the programme of opportunities, with one single exception, continues unchanged. The exception is that from 1st June Computer Science will join the group of subjects (Art, Music, PE, D&T, Food, RE) which organise their work around a single long term project rather than a series of single lessons.

Year 7

If you have a younger son or daughter who is expecting to join us in September, I will make this letter an opportunity to mention our arrangements for the transition to Year 8. We have prepared material in place of our normal transition day and evening, some of it in video form and some on paper. This will be going out by post over the next week or so and will also be on the school website.

Finally

May I repeat my thanks to everyone who is joining with us in making this experience as constructive as possible for our students. The best of what is being done is very heartening. Please continue to contact me if you can see ways in which we could be still more effective.

I hope that you and your family remain well.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters