

5<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Coronavirus Update 18**

I expect that the main theme of this week's letter does not require any introduction from me. The Government's announcement on Thursday that all secondary schools are to reopen fully in September has already received a good deal of publicity.

Putting this into practice is a complicated operation. The instructions and guidance run to 35 pages and we are still absorbing some of their implications. What I can do today is to introduce some of the adjustments we shall need to make. That will leave some detail to be filled in; I intend to give you that before the end of term.

But first we have two weeks of this school year still to run.

#### **Arrangements for next week, beginning Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

These have already been sent to parents and carers of students in Years 10 and 12. They remain as planned.

#### **Arrangements for the final week of term, beginning Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July**

##### **Years 8, 9 and 12**

Work will be set but there will be no live lessons. Staff will be responding to emails from their classes but not necessarily at the time of the lessons. In some subjects staff will be setting some additional work to be done during the summer holiday.

##### **Year 10**

The week is set aside for Virtual Work Experience. There will be no timetabled lessons, although some supplementary work will be set for the summer holiday. The Virtual Work Experience Programme will be set out in a package which will be posted to you this week. This will include the detailed arrangements and the necessary resources.

##### **Awards Evening**

Although our normal celebrations of achievement cannot be held this year, it remains important that we recognise what very many of our students have done during this extraordinary year. We shall do this as best we can, which is by distributing certificates through the post.

##### **School Reports**

You will receive an individual report through the post before the end of term. It will take account of the work done both before and during the lockdown.

## **RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **Proposed changes to the starting date**

In order to establish the students securely in their new situations I am asking the Governors to approve slightly different arrangements for the first week in September. These are:

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September: staff training day (as already announced).

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September: Year 8, Year 11 and Year 12 begin to attend.

Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Years 10 and 13 also begin to attend.

Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> September: Year 9 joins the other Year groups.

As the Wednesday had previously been designated as a training day this new scheme may create a problem for some families. If that is the case, please let me know. The training day will be deferred until later in the year.

### **The Guiding Principles**

Daily life at the high school is going to be different for everyone. The changes we are making are designed to minimise contact and maximise social distancing whilst making it possible to teach a secondary school curriculum.

### **Year Group Bubbles**

Each year group will spend its day in one particular part of the school. (For this purpose years 12 and 13 will be regarded as one group.) Each year group base will have its own:

- Entrance and exit
- Classrooms
- Access to ICT facilities
- Toilets
- Outdoor space
- Catering outlet
- Pastoral support
- SEN support

Members of a year group will therefore have no need to mix with members of any other year group. Indeed, it is essential that this does not happen.

### **Specialist Facilities**

We are all used to a system whereby it is the students who move, lesson by lesson, to a room especially set up for the subject concerned. That will change. By and large the students will remain in their own classroom and it is their teachers who will move to them. There will be some exceptions, otherwise some year groups would never experience certain specialised facilities. When this does happen the year group would move to a different base for the entire day.

## **Social Distancing**

These groups are large, all but one of them have over 250 members. It is not sufficient to ensure that our different year groups remain apart. We have also to minimise contact within the year groups. This will influence how we set out our classrooms, where staff position themselves within them and how we expect students to use their break and lunchtime.

## **Behaviour**

The situation places more responsibility on each and every student. Behaviour which would be unremarkable in normal times becomes a threat to the health of other students and their families at home. (I am very aware of the risk which behaviour at school can cause to close relatives who may be highly vulnerable.) We are revising our behaviour policy to reflect the new situation and will issue a new Code of Conduct.

## **Uniform**

The school uniform remains the same. When students have PE lessons they will be asked to wear their PE kit for the whole day. The PE changing rooms will be closed.

## **Basic Equipment**

There will be no lending of basic equipment. As a very minimum, each student will need to bring his or her own pen, pencil, ruler and scientific calculator. It would also be useful for students to have their own hand sanitiser.

## **School Catering.**

There will be hot food available, but the menu will be more limited. It will reduce the pressure on our temporary arrangements if more students choose to bring their own packed lunches. Free school meals will operate as normal.

## **Attendance**

Our system remains unchanged. Please continue to notify absences in the normal way. If you already know that your family circumstances will have implications for your child's attendance, please discuss the situation with his/her Head of House.

## **School Transport**

Mr Ward will be liaising with the bus companies and will be writing to you separately about this.

## **The School Day**

The start of the school day will remain the same. However, in these circumstances it make sense to trim some time from our normal breaks at mid-morning and at lunchtime. This enables us to end our school day rather earlier without reducing the time given to teaching. Therefore I am asking the Governors to agree to a new school closure time of no later than 3 pm.

## **Finally**

These are radical changes. They affect not only what and how our students learn, but their health and that of those at home. We must all do our best to get this right. The Reopening Committee meets on Tuesday afternoon. Please share your thoughts and suggestions with any of its members. They are listed below. As ever I welcome your emails myself.

Meanwhile, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters

## **Membership of the Reopening Committee**

Alan Fisher	Chair of Governors
Kath Bowen	Parent Governor
Karen Langridge	Governor (with a child in Year 10)
Andy Millicheap	Staff Governor
Mike Tibbits	Staff Governor
Sarah Habberton	Assistant Head of Sixth Form (also representing the teacher unions)
Angie Savage	Resources Manager
Kerry Moogan	Site Manager (also representing the support staff unions)
Jeanette Lowe	HR Manager
Natalie Waters	Headteacher