

20<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Coronavirus Update 22: What might lie ahead**

All but a few of our students are now back to school and becoming used to the compromises that this involves. The staff have also been making their adjustments – and that applies not only to teachers in the classrooms but across the whole of our site.

We shall be doing our best to see that this continues. Everyone at the High School hopes fervently that it does. Nevertheless, we have to be prepared for some problems that the future may hold. My letter today is to give you an outline of our plans to date. Should any of these situations begin to look very likely, I would be writing to you again with the details that you would need to have at hand.

#### **Situation 1**

In recent weeks we have seen the Government impose a set of additional restrictions on daily life in areas where there has been a surge of COVID cases. It is perfectly possible that our own part of Worcestershire may become one of those areas.

Were that to happen we in secondary schools may be required to make some important changes. What is not contemplated is the complete and immediate closure that we experienced in March. Instead we are required to plan for a rota of attendance, with only a part of the school on site at any one time.

This would be organised by year groups. If we were told to begin a rota system Years 8 and 10 would attend as normal for the first two weeks, whilst Years 9 and 12, with certain exceptions, remained at home. In the third and fourth weeks, Years 8 and 10 would remain at home, again with certain exceptions, whilst Years 9 and 12 would come back into school. Our hope is that Years 11 and 13 would be allowed to remain on site throughout and follow a normal timetable. This pattern would be repeated for as long as necessary.

In summary:

	Weeks 1 & 2	Weeks 3 & 4
Year 8	In school	Remote learning
Year 9	Remote Learning	In school
Year 10	In school	Remote learning
Year 12	Remote learning	In school
Year 11	In school	In school
Year 13	In school	In school

During the weeks of remote learning we shall continue to provide teaching online using Microsoft Teams, organising it around the current school timetable. Among the many lessons we learned from the summer lockdown was the value of good domestic IT facilities when students are learning at home. Now that we know more precisely what students in a particular class can call upon at home and what they cannot, we shall aim to take account of that in the work we ask them to do.

These arrangements, I should add, assume that we have sufficient staff to implement every part of the scheme. If a number of teachers are unwell or self-isolating we would have to adapt accordingly.

### **Exceptions**

In addition to Year 11 and Year 13 there are certain other groups of students who will not have to spend half of their time learning at home. These are:

- a) Children of Key Workers

Next week we will be updating our register of students whose parents are key workers.

- b) Students for whom it is especially advantageous to be on the school site throughout.

This will include all students with an EHCP and those in certain other groups. Should this situation arise, we shall notify you if your son or daughter falls into one of these categories.

Those who do come onto the school site while others in their year group are at home will be taught in their usual lessons. However, their teacher will be teaching a live lesson on Microsoft Teams to students at home at the same time as teaching those who are in school.

### **Situation 2**

This is the situation which I outlined in my letter to you of last week. Should I be informed that one of our students or a member of staff has been tested for COVID-19 and found positive, I have to report this to Public Health England. They will make their assessment of the infection spreading and tell me what measures we have to take.

These may include telling a certain year group or part of a year group that it should remain at home for a period of time. Here and now, of course, I cannot set out for you exactly how that would work out in practice. Each department, however, has prepared a plan which would allow its scheme of work for the term to be maintained despite the students learning remotely.

We hope that Public Health England would allow us to provide on the school site for the exceptions I have described in Situation 1.

### **Situation 3**

Another unpredictable factor is the impact of infection and self-isolation on the teaching staff. To run the school safely we must have sufficient teachers. We have to be prepared for a situation where we lack the staff necessary to keep every class on site. Were that to happen our priority would be to protect the teaching on site of classes working for external exams. I would hope to provide remote learning for any groups not in school, but that depends upon the missing staff being sufficiently well. If we could not provide live lessons on Microsoft Teams, work would be set for students to complete at home.

I realise that there are many loose ends in the arrangements I have outlined. This letter will probably provoke as many questions as it answers but I hope it gives you at least a sense of where we are and where we might find ourselves.

Meanwhile, I hope for the best among all of our families.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters