

19 June 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Headteacher Update

This week has seen us reopen our doors to more students as we welcomed back Year 10 into school for face-to-face sessions to support their learning. It has been fantastic to see the students and many of them expressed some relief that we are taking some steps towards normality. There is no doubt that face-to-face time will benefit these students who sit their important GCSE examinations next summer. Significant caution has been taken to ensure that bringing more students and staff into the building has been as safe as possible and we have been working in line with our robust risk assessment and risk reduction processes. We have been delighted by the way that everyone in school has been following new requirements and adhering to safety guidance so carefully and conscientiously. We are currently limited to only having 25% of permitted year groups in school at any one time, and the 2m social distancing rule limits the number of lessons we can deliver (due to space and staff numbers), but nevertheless this week marks a huge step forwards on the road back to normality.

We now have two distinct groups in school – year 10 and our special provision for children of key workers and other invited students. The special provision has seen its numbers increase as families become more confident and as more parents are required to return to their workplace. Please let us know if you are a key worker and would now like your child to attend school on one or more days of the week. We run a programme of online learning and additional activity sessions and students have appreciated the calm and quiet atmosphere to complete their work

The government continues to roll out new plans and guidance concerning further reopening. Announcements are usually made ahead of any detail and we hear these at the same time as the public. You have my word that as soon as we receive further clarity about various initiative and have had a chance to consider what they mean for our school (for example the newly announced tutor programme) I will write to inform you of our approach and response. In this, as in so many things, I appreciate the patience and support.

Limited further opportunities for Yr 7-9

I will be writing separately to parents of students in year 7-9 as, due to a government announcement earlier in the week, schools now have some limited flexibility to be able to invite students in these year groups into school for a one off face-to-face session before the summer holidays. Whilst we are keen to explore this opportunity, we will only be able to do this if we can do so safely, and are able to staff these sessions adequately. I will be asking parents of Yr 7-9 students to let me know if they would be keen for the school to offer this opportunity as this information will help us to determine what we are able to offer.

Online Work

Meanwhile our online learning programme continues for all year groups. I have seen some exceptional pieces of work which have been submitted by students in their online lessons and I am incredibly proud of the resilience and determination that many of them are showing. Home schooling is not easy and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank parents for keeping your children on track and supporting us when we have flagged any concerns. We will continue to keep you informed and would remind you to use the ClassCharts parent app to monitor the work that has been set for your child.

Looking forward to September

We are aware that whatever happens around schools reopening, September will see the need for different approaches to support students and recover the learning that has been lost over the last 12 weeks. Across the trust, our school leaders have been working collaboratively in three working groups to develop planning and strategies to ensure that we are as prepared as possible for whatever position we find ourselves in. These working groups are focused on three key areas:

- *Student Wellbeing and pastoral support*
- *The Curriculum – what we need to do to support students in recovering lost learning opportunities*
- *Blended learning – looking at how a mix of online and face to face teaching can have maximum impact (learning the lessons of our current online teaching approach)*

We will be using the insights and outcomes from these groups to shape our response and recovery plan going forwards. I will, of course, keep you updated with this initiative.

Student Reports

Some parents have been in contact regarding information on the progress of their child and whether parents and students will receive reports in the summer term. The Department for Education has advised schools to not collect any further data and we will be following this guidance so there will not be a final DCP report for students as originally planned. In September we will be looking to assess student learning and begin to address any gaps and we will report to current attainment of students within the first term.

Black Lives Matter

We are appalled by the incident in which George Floyd sadly lost his life; the subsequent demonstrations and discussions around racism have been profound. As a school, we are committed to combatting racism and prejudice in all its forms and promoting equality for all. We are proud of our multi-cultural school community and we will continue to look for ways to celebrate our unity within diversity. Our motto says that we are a school of "Opportunity, Diversity and Success For All" and our values of equality and equity resonate through all that we do. I believe, however, that every institution should strive to do better and to use this moment in history to examine and consider the issues and themes that have come into such sharp focus. Last week saw students receive a virtual lessons and assemblies on this topic and that was important, but we must take a longer term view and consider more fundamentally what contribution we can make in addressing structural and society wide inequality in order to bring about real change. This is something we will be considering deeply across the Maiden Erlegh Trust and Miss Davies, CEO, will be writing to all parents to outline what Trust schools will be looking to do over the coming year and beyond.

Calendar Changes

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to remind you that school will be "closed" (including all online learning and the special provision) on Friday 3 July for our staff training day which will be focused on the planning necessary for a range of possible future scenarios in September.

Furthermore, we originally published that the return to school date for students in the Autumn term was to have been Thursday 3 September. This date is now being moved to Friday 4 September for years 8-11 to allow us to facilitate a transition day for the new Year 7 students. I am sure you will appreciate that the step up from primary to secondary school is a big change and our usual summer term transition processes have been hugely disrupted, including being unable to organise a transition day which has proven to be so important in supporting our youngest students.

As ever, I will continue to keep you updated as we continue to progress through the final weeks of the term

Yours Sincerely,



Mr A Johnson
Headteacher