

18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Students and Parents

I hope you and your families are well and coping with the continued, albeit slightly eased, lock down arrangements.

Firstly, may I say well done to our students for how well they have adjusted and engaged with remote learning during these very difficult times. Staff have been informing me of the great work that is being completed. However, please remember if you are struggling with any elements of your work, let your teachers know and they will be happy to help you. In addition, if you need any support for your wellbeing please do not hesitate to contact your Head of Year and they will do their utmost to assist you. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank parents, as you continue to support the learning of your children at home, very often balancing this with your own work and wider family commitments.

Secondly, as the government's announcement to begin re-opening schools from 1<sup>st</sup> June continues to dominate press and other media outlets, I would like to take this opportunity to say that we want students back in school as soon as it is possible and safe to do so. Therefore, since the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May and subsequent briefing papers released from central government this week, we have been developing potential plans for the return of Year 10 and Year 12 students for some face-to-face contact with teachers prior to the summer holiday period. We have also not ruled out similar contact with Year 9 students prior to the summer. However, given Year 10 and Year 12 will sit external exams in 2021 they have been identified as the priority year groups for planning purposes, for the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year.

This planning is not straightforward given some of the guidance, especially in relation to secondary schools, has been vague and, at times, lacks clarity. This situation has been compounded further by contradictory scientific advice depending on who is issuing it.

For this reason, I believe it is important that I let students and parents know where we are with our current thinking. This is as follows:

We are looking at options for the staggered return of Year 10 and Year 12 students in relatively small cohorts, on a part time basis.

However, this will be based on the following overriding principles:

- That this can be done in a way that is safe for students and staff and their families. We are currently doing a lot of work on risk assessments and safety protocols which is complicated, given we have 370 students in Year 10 and nearly 300 in Year 12. If we feel we cannot return safely, we will not, and continue with lessons set each day by teachers for home learning.
- We will only ask students to return if we feel we can offer something that is useful and meaningful to them in what will be the very short time they are with us given the need for only small groups of students in school at any one time.

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- If we proceed with a plan for some form of face to face contact with students, we will continue to monitor the government guidance and scientific advice and adapt or postpone any plans we have developed, if needed.
- Students being able to safely adhere to the recommended guidance for returning to school including the need for social distancing and hygiene recommendations.

Alongside this, I can confirm, that after half term we will continue to be open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children as we have been since the start of the lock down period. Under current plans, any phased return for Year 10 or Year 12 students will not happen until Week 2 of next half-term (week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> June) at the earliest but more likely Week 3 (week beginning Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June). This will give us the time we need to develop the plan and safety protocols that are so critical to school re-opening.

A number of parents have already contacted me to express their concerns about sending their children back to school. Delaying our proposed return will permit us to present our plan and safety protocols to both students and parents to allow you to make an informed decision about whether to return for this adapted timetable prior to the summer break.

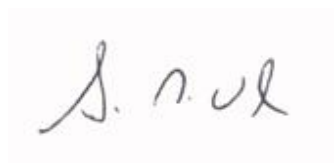
The opportunity for home learning will continue even if we are offering some face to face contact with students. This will ensure no students miss out.

I will write to you again in more detail with our plan either during or immediately after the half-term holiday.

I hope this clarifies things as best as we can in such uncertain times and thank you for your patience as we continue to take the necessary steps to create a safe and measured plan for re-opening.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



STEVE WILSON  
Headteacher