

Dear Students and Parents

I am writing to update you with our plans for next half term.

However, I would like to start by congratulating and thanking our students for the fantastic start they have made to this academic year under the strangest of circumstances. I have been so impressed with how students have seamlessly adapted to the new procedures and protocols in place. The atmosphere as I walk round the school site and the learning that is taking place in lessons is a pleasure to witness.

As you will recall, I wrote to you both before and during the summer holiday period to outline our plans for re-opening in September. We were determined to produce a plan that was safe for students and staff and that allowed students, in all year groups, access to a full curriculum with specialist teachers in each subject area. This led to the changes in the school day that students and parents are now familiar with. I am pleased to say this plan appears to have worked. The safety aspect of this plan was endorsed by a Local Authority Health and Safety inspection that described our year group bubble protocols and health and safety procedures as excellent with no recommendations for improvement – this is unusual for such an inspection.

As I said in my letter on 17th July 2020, we saw this revised structure to the school day as temporary and want to return to a normal school day as soon as possible - this remains our aim. However, given where we are nationally with COVID-19 and we are now an area of local lockdown I feel it is not the right time to change the current arrangements.

Therefore, with the support of the Governing Body*, and with some small changes to the year group bubbles, the structure of the school day will remain the same for next half-term.

My ambition is still that by the Spring Term at the latest we will be able to return to something like a normal school day, however, this will continue to depend on the national and local picture in relation to COVID-19.

Changes for Next Half Term

Change to bubbles:

- Yr.10 and Yr.11 Blocks/Bubbles will change. Yr.11 will move to C Block and Yr.10 will move to B Block. This change will allow Yr.11 students a half term where they can carry out the practical assessments required to complete their GCSE courses in specialist rooms as much as possible.
- This will also mean that Yr.11 students will enter and exit the school via Gate 4 (the new gate)
- Year 10 students will enter and exit the school via Gate 3.
- The changes to Blocks/Bubbles and safety procedures will be explained to students during tutorial sessions prior to the October half-term break.
- Yr.10 and Yr.11 students will receive new timetables outlining their new classrooms and tutor base.
- There will be no change to Yr.9, Yr.12 and Yr.13 Blocks/Bubbles

Changes to Tutorial Times:

There will be a change to Yr.11 and Yr.9 tutorial times.

- Yr.11 tutorial will take place from 8.40 am until 9.10 am next half term.
- To maintain the staggered start times, Yr.9 tutorial will start 8.55 am to 9.10 am next half term.
- There will be no change to Yr.10, Yr.12 and Yr.13 tutorial timings.

This change will allow Yr.11 students more time with their tutors to provide additional wellbeing and revision support as they approach their GCSE exams after such a period of disruption.

Timings of the School Day

Apart from the tweaks highlighted above, the overall timings of the school day will not change next half term – break times and the end of the school day will remain the same

Catch up sessions

- These sessions have worked very well and I am pleased so many students are benefitting from this additional support. They will continue next half term for Yr.11 and Yr.13 students on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. The emphasis in these sessions will change for some subjects to ensure the practical components of courses are covered.
- **For parents and students in Yr.9, Yr.10 and Yr.12** - I hope you understand our current emphasis on Yr.11 and Yr.13 in terms of these catch up sessions. I think this Yr.11 and Yr.13 cohort of students in this exam year have the potential to be hardest hit by the disruption to education caused by COVID-19. Hence, we are prioritising these students first in terms of catch up sessions. However, please be reassured we are also looking at ways, as we always do, to support all year groups with additional support as we move through this term and beyond.

Indeed, one of the strengths of this school is the willingness of staff to provide such additionality for students. We are all looking forward to the day when we can run our usual early morning, lunchtime and after school support sessions that I know students and parents in all year groups have appreciated in the past.

FAQs

I will be shortly putting on our website a Frequently Asked Question section to try to address the understandable queries you may have.

Conclusion

I continue to be so proud of how our students have responded to the new normal in terms of schooling. I would like to thank parents for all the messages of support we have received – they are very much appreciated.

Headteacher:
Steve Wilson

Deputy Headteachers:
Linda Buckle
Andrew Sherlaw

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I would also like to thank our teaching and support staff whose hard work, optimism and positivity mean this continues to be a very happy place to work and study for staff and students.

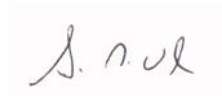
*Message from Chair of Governors Helen Thompson

One of the most important tasks of the School Governing Body is to support the school in delivering the very best education it can for all our students, whatever the circumstances. Since the onset of the pandemic, the flexibility and the speed of change that has been required from the whole school community has been remarkable and relentless. Yet WBHS staff and students have risen to each challenge and have proactively managed its way through, whilst remaining true to its ethos and values. This has only been possible with a strong school leadership team and Headteacher and we would like to recognise their dedication and commitment to making it all work.

We will continue to work closely with Steve Wilson and his team and endeavour to find solutions to any barriers and challenges, to ensure that the excellent education continues.

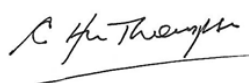
We cannot do this without the ongoing support of parents, carers and the local community and therefore regular, informative and open communication with you all remains a key priority. The Governing Body would like to thank you all for your ongoing support, respect and understanding of the difficulties faced and to reassure you that the School and the Governing Body are totally committed to working in the interests of your children and their futures.

Yours faithfully



STEVE WILSON

Headteacher



HELEN THOMPSON

Chair of Governors