

23rd March 2021

Dear Parents and Students,

The return to school has gone very well and I would like to thank students for their positive and enthusiastic approach. I would also like to thank parents/carers for supporting their children during the recent lockdown with their academic studies while often balancing work commitments.

We have been considering our plans for the summer term carefully and I wanted to inform you of the arrangements we are putting in place starting Monday 12th April.

Tutorial Times:

Following discussions with the pastoral teams, we intend to maintain the current tutorial arrangements but change the time year groups start.

Therefore, after Easter:

- Year 9 will start at 8.40am;
- Year 10 will start at 8.45am;
- Year 11 will start at 8.50am;
- Sixth Form will remain after school. (Year 13: Wednesday and Thursday 2.45pm-3.05pm. Year 12: Thursday 2.45pm-3.15pm).

Entry and Exit Gates and Year Group bubbles will remain the same.

The Timetable:

We will move to **one-hour lessons** and change the timings and length of break times to the following:

Tutorial	See times above.	
Period 1	9.00am – 10.00am	
Period 2	10.00am – 11.00am	
Break	11.00am – 11.15am	Break now <u>15 minutes</u> not 20 minutes.
Period 3	11.15am – 12.15pm	
Break	12.15pm – 12.45pm	Break now after Period 3 and <u>30 minutes</u> not 20 minutes.
Period 4	12.45pm – 1.45pm	
Period 5	1.45pm – 2.45pm	

As you are aware, it has always been our intention to increase lesson time as it is deemed safe to do so, and these changes are moving closer to what was the pre pandemic timetable.

We also felt that with the move to one-hour lessons, students and staff would benefit from a longer break, however, we had to balance this with students having to remain in their bubbles and remain on site during these breaks. It is during breaks when social distancing and face-covering wearing is harder to maintain. Students have, however, been very responsible in wearing face coverings and we appreciate your support with this.

Regarding face coverings, no further guidance has yet been released by the Department for Education (DfE) about their use after the Easter Break. Once we receive this guidance, I will contact you again with further details.

Catch-Up Sessions/Subject Knowledge and Skill Enhancement Sessions:

Year 11 and Year 13 Catch-Up sessions will shortly come to an end:

For Year 11, our final catch-up sessions will be the additional English, Maths and Science morning sessions during the Easter holiday next week. I am pleased to report the take up for these sessions is excellent.

For Year 13, we will complete their final additional sessions as part of the catch-up programme this week.

This will then allow us to run Subject Knowledge and Skill Enhancement Sessions for Year 10 and Year 12 students next half term as we have done for Year 11 and Year 13. We will also organise Subject Knowledge and Skill Enhancement sessions for Year 9 students later in the summer term.

Centre Assessed Grades:

As I write this letter the detailed guidance promised by the DfE to support teachers in making their judgements about Centre Assessed Grades, has still not been provided by the exam boards. This is expected at some stage before the end of the Spring Term.

In addition, the DfEs proposal to provide optional questions provided by the exam boards to help teachers make their grade decisions are, reportedly, mainly past paper exam questions that teachers already have access to and have been using.

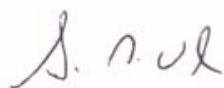
Given this, I think it is important to highlight, that at WBHS we have been anticipating the 2021 Summer Exam Season not going ahead since last September. Therefore, we are in a strong position. All departments have been setting and assessing work throughout Year 11 and Year 13 both when students were in school and during lockdown. This will continue as we move into next term.

I think it is important to remember that exams were cancelled for a reason. This was predominantly because they were deemed unfair given the differing levels of disruption to education students had experienced locally, nationally and within each school. Therefore, we will not be replicating our own exam season within school. Indeed, I think to do so would place undue stress on students and has the potential to negatively impact on grades.

Instead, our Centre Assessed Grades will be based on the assessed work students have been doing and will continue to do throughout their course. By the end of next half-term all the assessed work within each department will have been completed by students. **Therefore, students will finish their GCSE and A Level studies on Friday 28th May.** This is the start of the May half-term holiday and would have been when students started their study leave had exams gone ahead.

I wish you a happy and restful Easter break and I would like to thank you for your continued support. I will provide more information as we receive it.

Yours faithfully



STEVE WILSON
Headteacher