

May 15th 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

There are a number of important matters I would like to update you on this week.

Work for students

I am very aware that many of our students are working extremely hard on the work being sent them by staff and they are continuing to learn with your support. There are however some students who are finding the separation from school routine quite challenging. Others are struggling because they need to share access to computers and so feel they are getting behind. For this reason, we are going to use next week as a consolidation week. We are not going to set any new work (apart from some Maths lessons to trial recorded lessons) but all students are asked to make sure they are up to date with what has been set so far. If they are up to date then students can follow lessons on BBC bitesize, other learning platforms or take the opportunity to do some research on ideas that interest them. We will let students know this through Show My Homework- now called Satchel One.

The wellbeing and mental health of our students is so important and I do not want any student feeling overwhelmed by the distance learning. No student should be doing more than 5 hours of learning on school set work in any day or worrying about not getting through everything –please reassure them of this.

Some parents have asked whether live lessons with teachers will be possible through platforms such as Zoom or Teams. We have talked about this as local headteachers but live lessons present innumerable problems from a safeguarding and access point of view and so there are no plans for this. We are going to be trialling some recorded part lessons and Maths will pilot this.

On the school website there is a link and some information about an NHS artwork project run by Lancashire Mind.

Congratulations to all those students who engaged with the VE day work last Friday – we received some great art work, poems and creative writing.

School Re-opening

Since the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday evening there has obviously been a lot of talk of schools reopening and there has been much in the news. I have to say that the guidance we have received is not always very clear but what is certain is that there are no plans for Years 7-9 to return to school before the summer holidays. It is expected that, if the infection rate continues to drop nationally, secondary schools will offer some face to face in school contact for Year 10 students before the summer. Thank you to almost 75% of Year 10 parents who responded to my survey to help the planning process. Please be rest assured that we are looking at plans for Year 10 to be able to return in a limited way while taking all necessary precautions and following all the advice we can to protect students and staff. We will also co-ordinate this with other secondary schools in the area. This partial return of Year

10 would not start as early as June 1st but I will keep you informed and explain all the plans and precautions we have put in place once they have been finalised.

School continues to be open for children of key workers and those children considered vulnerable. If you are a key worker who has now returned to work or will shortly be doing so and your child now needs a place in school, please let me know, providing details of your key worker role, so that I can plan staffing accordingly.

Half Term (May 25th-29th)

The week of May 25th-29th is technically half term and Monday 25th is a bank holiday. If you are a key worker who requires your child to be in school that week could you please let me know which days so that again I can plan the appropriate staffing. I would be grateful if you could let me know these details by Tuesday May 19th.

FSM Vouchers

Vouchers have been ordered for the week May 11th and 18th and you should receive one code to cover both these weeks if you get the vouchers via email. There does seem to have been some delay with Edenred this week so please keep checking but I can see this morning that many families have now been able to redeem the code. My current understanding is that the Government will not be funding vouchers for half term week and we would order the next vouchers for weeks beginning June 1st and 8th. As always, if you find yourselves in difficult circumstances please do contact us and we will do what we can to help.

Iceland Trip

The Geography field trip to Iceland should have been leaving next Thursday but obviously that is not happening and Easyjet have finally cancelled the flights. We have rearranged the trip provisionally for November 4-7th at no additional cost but will now just have to see how the national situation develops.

Finally

Thank you for the very positive and encouraging emails many of you have sent to staff during these challenging times. There is clearly a long way to go to get anywhere near normality but we will continue to do all we can to support the learning and wellbeing of all our students.

Please continue to stay safe

Andrew Waller

Headteacher