



Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your family are safe and well and were able to manage some sort of break over what would have been our half term holiday. As we approach the return to school for some of our students I thought it would be appropriate to update you on what has been happening, what we have planned for the remainder of this term and what have in mind for when normality returns. While we all hope this will be as soon as possible, as a school we are actively preparing for a full normal opening for all students in September alongside alternative plans should we be instructed to do otherwise.

When the lockdown began we immediately created a temporary Google site with work available while staff rapidly learnt how to access, use and create lessons on Google classroom. While Google is an amazing resource which we have only just begun exploiting and it has the potential to work fantastically well alongside other resources such as Knowledge Organisers, GCSE Pod and our e-library it will never replace real teaching in the classroom. Many staff have gone from zero understanding to becoming proficient at uploading work and being able to set up tasks for students to complete and upload. We have set fun and daft challenges and then moved to providing pastoral support for not just our most vulnerable students but all of them. All the while watching students perform some incredible community spirited actions and our own staff help key workers, their children and try and manage their own family needs.

But we know we can do more. Staff have been learning how to screen cast lessons and we have been challenging them to try it out in the lessons they are creating. Our next step is to deliver live lectures for students and we are going to begin this from Monday 15th June for Year 7, 8 and 9 and provide a lecture for each year group at a set time each day. English, Maths, Science, History and Geography departments have volunteered to trial this and offer one lesson a week. These sessions will work alongside our current provision. For Year 7 & 8 we are developing weekly knowledge organiser quizzes which we will collate and monitor as students complete them and this will also start on 15th June. Moving forward quizzes like this will form part of our fortnightly homework rotation for KS3 when school get back to normal and we can track at a whole school level how well students are utilising their knowledge organisers. For 2020/21 we will also introduce Knowledge Organisers for Year 9 and termly Learning Organisers for KS4. In addition to this, for students in Year 9 who have already selected their options we are beginning to roll out Key



Stage 4 option classes in Google so they can begin their GCSE courses early and class codes for this will be circulated shortly. On a pastoral front we are also looking forward to some online assemblies from each House during this half term!

As you will no doubt be aware the 15th June is the date that has been announced for the return of Year 10 & 12 students. While we had hoped more year groups would have been able to return or at least reacquaint themselves with school we have been planning for students to return safely. With a maximum of 25% of a year group permitted in school at any one time we have opted for a gradual approach for students to return with a fortnight of pastoral tutorials and some work be delivered and set by English, maths and science staff. The Trust and school have been working with an external Health and Safety consultant to ensure our plans are safe, measured and comply with the latest DFE guidelines. We have actively gone above and beyond what is expected of the requirements and have bought temperature guns so we can assess students as they arrive in school at a safe distance, purchased mobile hand sanitisers that can be used as students enter and leave dedicated teaching areas and we are awaiting delivery of some of our own 'disinfection fogger machines' which will enable us deep clean the site on a regular basis working alongside our regular cleaning company. More information for Year 10 & 12 students will be shared very soon.

We have also been discussing whether as a school we are able to provide any summer school provision for a wide range of children, be it to close any gaps for those at risk of falling behind or just the chance to complete some Key Stage 4 or 5 coursework. As I write to you the government are discussing this but whether a scheme is created nationally or not or even if Great Sankey are eligible we are exploring whether we could offer something during the 'summer holiday' period. During the next couple of weeks, we will investigate this further and update you in due course.

While the school has been closed we have been thinking very carefully of what changes we can make to improve what we do at Great Sankey and have been planning for September. Throughout 2019/20 the school has been working with Ambition Institute an organisation at the cutting edge of educational research on how to improve learning and teaching. This partnership will continue into next year but the lockdown has given the school the opportunity to review every scheme of learning that it delivers. Subject areas are creating and aligning existing work with the ambition of dropping weekly resources used in lessons each week for their individual classes lesson plans, worksheets, homework and power points. Should a teacher be absent from school, or a student unable to attend lessons or a local lockdown take place we will then be able to seamlessly deliver our planned learning to all children across the school. In terms of physical changes, the new science block looks stunning and the new electronic screens are being installed. The new catering block which will seat over 750 children in each sitting will be opened in phases during the remainder of this year. This work alone will also see over 20 new individual toilets, hand basin and dryer being available for students alongside our existing provision. Furthermore, as much of the main school begins to be refurbished we are exploring the opportunity of creating a new entrance and exit in one of the busiest corridors in school.

For students taking GCSE, vocational and A level exams this year Great Sankey has rigorously followed the OFQUAL guidelines and all centre assessed grades have been reviewed by class teachers, heads of department and the senior team in a quality assurance process to ensure that we treat all students equitably. As head of centre I have to confirm that the process has been robust and fair for all students. In addition to this, I have been in regular contact with the deputy director of policy of ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) who has been the main link between schools nationally and OFQUAL to ensure that our approach at Great Sankey is the very best that it can be for our students.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that from 1st May we appointed a new SENCO to the school and Miss Edwards has already begun co-ordinating the launch of our Thinking Reading project, the new provision mapping software, our recent links with the ADHD foundation and reinvigorating the department to ensure it adopts a research driven approach to bring the best out in all of our young people.

As you can see from the above we have a busy half term ahead and we will provide updates in due course. We know some of our community have lost loved ones over the course of the pandemic and our thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time. At school our priority continues to be the safety of students, staff and their families and I wish you all good health and that you stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Shannon
Headteacher