



Dear Parents and Carers,

The last two weeks have been focused on making the site ready to accept more children into our key worker provision, along with our plans to welcome back Year 10. I wanted to take this opportunity to communicate across the entire school community with a thank you for your continued support and to pass on further information about the school as things stand at this moment in time.

Constant Good News

At a time of challenge globally, we are trying our best to celebrate the many wonderful things your children are doing during this time.

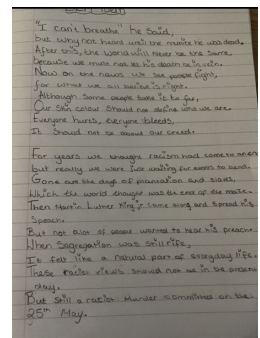
Please keep an eye on our website, our twitter feed as well as our Facebook page where we can show off the amazing work. We are also creating a regular update through our virtual assemblies and the digital edition of LSA values to support and showcase some of the student work that has shone through in recent weeks. Please make sure you catch these via Satchel:One or here at <https://sway.office.com/Xbamx9IWgRNyINpD?ref=email>

Year 10

We have been in touch constantly with students and parents in year 10 after the government decision to extend provision. We are delighted to be seeing year 10 back from next week, in small numbers. Again, parents and students have been brilliant, sharing their fears and excitement and have been understanding of the difficult situation we all find ourselves in.

Government Plans: What we know

As at the start of this crisis, we have worked hard to follow the government guidance. At the moment, schools remain closed except for a provision for year 10 students (maximum ¼ in school each day) and a care provision for a group of students. After that, the government have asked schools to use "best endeavours" to maintain some form of learning remotely. This has been a challenge, but I am so proud of what we have achieved and the impact.





Government Plans: Summer

There was an announcement about summer schools on national TV, but no details have made it to school yet. However, as soon as they do, we will unpick what that means for us and we will share with you. It is important during this time that we do not create even more pressure and stress on young people in an effort to “catch up” when so many have shown they are producing excellent work, consistently. We will want to support families over the summer, but it will be to ensure we are ready to return and understanding the effort needed when we return. I have read in the press today that money may be available so we will wait further information.



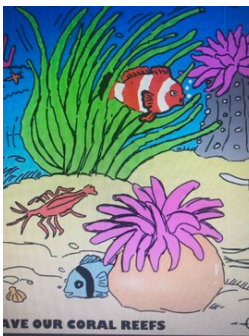
Student Engagement

Whilst we pride ourselves on equality and fairness, this situation has clearly been even more of a challenge for some. Despite days where we have 90%+ engagement from our students, there are some who have struggled to submit work. We continue to provide additional support and resources for these children and as part of this continued focus, we are aiming to offer some extra sessions to support their work submission and engagement with our virtual school. We will keep families informed if they are required to be part of this.



Family Support

Whilst there is a focus on missed learning time, we know that this will be the same for all children. However, the part that worries us most is the impact on social and mental health issues. We have kept in touch regularly and we have signposted hundreds of people to support services. Times are really difficult, and we are currently working on how school may look in the future. We started a lot of work before lock-down to try and get our students to see things differently, to focus on positives and learn from failure/challenge.



This will be even more important when we return. Months of content have been missed, but in the overall scheme of things, this can be addressed.

In the meantime, please visit the school website regularly and look at the support available during the Covid19 pandemic. We have information for Lancashire and Blackpool residents <https://www.lythamhigh.lancs.sch.uk/parents/support-for-parents-carers-and-students-during-coronavirus>

Equality Group

Since September staff at LSA have been looking at our curriculum and cultural capital. Ofsted identifies this as introducing pupils to “the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.”. Following training in March, staff have been committed to ensuring we seek out and teach the truth about human creativity and achievement and that we do not offer only a very narrow focus. This has been fascinating, in particular in Science, History and English as well as many other departments.

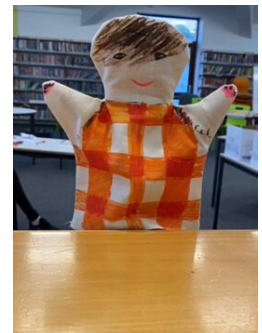
We have recently formed an Equality Strategy Group to support staff in this work. We want to ensure that our values of Aspiration, Endeavour, Integrity and Respect are evident in everything we do. At the moment this involves a number of staff and we are delighted to have a parent, Ms Rambelli, who has agreed to join the group. We would really like to include another Parent Representative, so if you are happy to volunteer, have a keen interest in ending discrimination of all forms and in developing cultural capital for our pupils, please email Gill Clegg Deputy Head Teacher on gillian.clegg@lythamhigh.lancs.sch.uk to express your interest and find out a little more about the role.

Access to Free School Meals

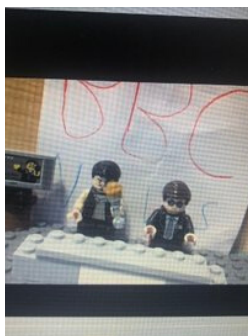
With a fast changing economic picture, circumstances are changing rapidly. Please make sure that you visit <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/?page=3> and complete a form to see if you are eligible for Free School Meals.

Learning in Years 7 to 9

You will hear much about “blended learning” This is a phrase that is now used to describe a model of work set by school that incorporates a mixture of presentations, activities and tasks. In some subject areas you will begin to see some live, face to face teaching. We have responded to a number of questions about videos and live lessons and have presented the evidence and thought behind our approach. We know we cannot get it right for everyone, but families are coming together to produce amazing work. Please revisit the letter from Danell Dearden explaining how to get the best from virtual learning in your home and how to motivate your child should they need any further support to help them self-regulate.



[Technology work by key worker students and Mrs Ainsworth]



Pastoral changes

Much of our time is now focused on life after Covid19. In order to meet the social and academic needs of the children, we are looking at making changes to certain areas of the school. One of the initial changes will be the introduction of Heads of Year in place of the college leader roles to work alongside the Assistant Headteachers.

The reason for this is that there will be many issues (social, academic and emotional) that require more precise experience and skill. For example, when year 7 return their needs will be different to the needs of year 11. Creating experts in these areas will be key to the move back to normality. This move is only possible due to the skills and experience of our current pastoral team and our fantastic College Leaders will move into these roles as soon as possible.



We know for some that the ending of the College System will be emotional, but we will work with students, staff and parents to ensure the transition to a new pastoral leader is smooth.

Comment about the future

At this stage, all that we know is that the government are committed to all students returning to school in September and we cannot wait to get back to normal. However, we have to have realism alongside our excitement and aspiration. As it stands, the current 2m social distancing rule allows 8 students per classroom. This would only allow a maximum of a quarter of the school to return if these rules are still in place in September. If the distance is reduced to one metre minimum, then this would allow 14-16 students in most classrooms. Again, without doubling space or doubling teacher capacity, this would still only allow half the school to be on site. As you can see, it will not simply be a case of "business as usual" in September.

Having been open and honest throughout, I feel it is important to share with parents our initial thoughts about next year. We are working on our teaching plans for this now, but they will be underpinned by a couple of key principles. It is NOT about catching up. It is about moving forward from wherever we are and making sure our students are safe, happy and resilient learners. Teachers will plug gaps in knowledge that they uncover, but this is an everyday occurrence. When we know what the exam boards expect, we will adapt, change and intervene to give children the best chance of getting the best grades. The pandemic has impacted unfairly, and children should not be disadvantaged even further. We have structured our remote learning carefully to work this way.

Secondly, we should prepare ourselves for school in September being potentially different to what we knew previously. It is likely that, until the country returns fully to normality, school will have to find a way of seeing as many students as it can safely accommodate,

within the restraints of the government guidance. However, we have to start preparing for the potential that only half the students can be present on site each day and that it is likely that there will be a continued focus on remote learning to compliment the lessons in school. We will do everything we can to create a new normal when September comes, but the idea of blended learning (mixing home learning, school, tutorials, online meetings etc.) is something we have to prepare for.

This is not what we want. We want normality. We want a busy school, full of amazing students. We want an end to the coronavirus so that this can happen. However, we have to work with the restrictions and guidance we are given. Whatever format school is required to take, we will be ready!

Keep Safe,



Ray Baker
Headteacher

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