



24 April 2020

Dear Parents

I hope this letter finds you all well.

You will have heard much in the media this week about when schools may or may not reopen. Please can I reassure you that we continue to plan for a range of possible outcomes. We will almost certainly hear more from the Prime Minister next week, as he explained in the Downing Street briefing yesterday, which may enable us to accelerate our planning further.

I think it is important for me to stress at this stage that school will, inevitably, be very different when we first reopen. If we are expected to manage social distancing, which we almost certainly will be, we will have to give serious thought to the number of children we can have in school at any one time. Clearly, we will keep you posted on this very important topic as soon as more national guidance has been issued.

Thank you to all of you who have been able to support your children this week with the work that their teachers have set them for their revision. Can I repeat my plea for your understanding and patience here. We have received some emails from parents asking for more work, some for less, some for more structured setting of work, some for more flexible. We are setting what we think is an appropriate amount of work for students to do but I would like to, once again, reiterate that we are very well aware that the home situations of families across the school are very different. We are fully aware that some parents are still working full-time and that it is really difficult for them to support their children as a result. This situation is clearly not of our choosing and we are doing our absolute best to provide the best education we can during a medical emergency.

Back in October, which now seems a lifetime away, we held Information Evenings for parents of students in Year 7, 10 and 11. In both evenings, part of the presentation focused on how you might best support your child at home. I thought it might be helpful to reiterate some of those key messages again today:

- Whenever students begin a task, it is always useful to spend a minute or two reflecting on what they last learned in this topic. This helps them to connect what they learn in that activity to their prior knowledge and will increase their chances of remembering what they have learned in the long term.
- Whenever students begin an activity, we encourage them to consider what success would look like if they do it really well; what are the specific characteristics of good work in this task (for example, it might be to use subject terminology or to refer to examples in detail)? This can often help them to increase the quality of the work they produce and enable them to easily self-assess their progress throughout the task.

- Whenever they have completed a learning activity, we encourage them to talk to someone about what they have learned. This encourages them to distil the key learning from the activity which, again, should increase the likelihood that they will retain the knowledge in the long-term. It also often leads to conversation which will help them to question what they have learned and build their understanding.

To make a similar point again, whilst we know that for many of you other responsibilities mean that there isn't the time to supervise your children with all of the work they complete, reminding them of these three points may help them to maximise the impact of the work they do.

Matt Ford, Assistant Headteacher, has put together a suggested timetable for the Year 10 exam week which begins on Monday 11th May. This is attached to the Parentmail. This is only a suggested timetable and students do not need to follow it – it is there for a guide for those who want it. The timetable has been constructed to balance exams across the course of the week. That said, for some students, they will find this too much. We will be absolutely flexible about students wanting to sit fewer exams than suggested in one day if they would like to opt, instead, to complete them over the weekend or even, in order to help them manage the exam period, into the early part of the following week. Please do bear in mind, however, that staff will be setting new work for Year 10 students to complete from Monday 18th May,

On a separate note, we do plan to be open for those students who are currently attending school (children of key workers, etc) on the bank holiday on Friday 8th May. Please could I ask that parents, to whom this applies, to contact Vicky Pickford, Assistant Headteacher, to confirm whether their children will be coming into school that day.

With all best wishes for the week ahead.

Yours faithfully



Mat Hunter
Headteacher