

Dear Parents / Carers

As we approach the final four weeks of term I just want to update you on a few things.

### **Partial reopening**

It has been fantastic having 120 Year 10 pupils in, spread over three days a week, and working within groups of no more than 10. The amount of preparation needed for this to have happened has been staggering, and I thank everyone involved. It was good to be able to talk to those pupils here to give them our take on the situation. One point I tried to make clear is that what we want them to do is to carry on doing the best they can, at the work we have set them to complete online. If they do that they will be doing their bit. Of course, this message applies to all pupils in all years. We have to believe that there will be measures taken within the wider education system to ensure no pupil is disadvantaged in any way by the school's closure.

Year 12 will return next week, again in small numbers, and we look forward to seeing them too. I am keeping everything crossed, hoping that September will see yet more pupils able to come back in some form and we will keep you fully informed about that. It is interesting to see media coverage, some of which suggests teachers are reluctant to get back to work. This is really interesting, because the fact is none of them have ever stopped work. Obviously I can only report what happens in our school, but I can tell you with utter confidence that the staff here cannot wait to get back to normal. Online working is inefficient and not as effective for the overwhelming majority of pupils. I think it is fair to say teachers' workload has increased during this time, although we don't feel we are being as productive as usual. Truly, we look forward to getting back to school with a full complement of pupils.

### **The way we work**

It is true that when we prepared for the school closure, we were embarking on something brand new for us. It is also true that we believed we were putting into place relatively short term measures and had very little time to plan and deliver them. Discussions about online teaching approaches and systems have dominated our professional conversation during this time. Now that it appears to us that we may well not be returning fully in September, we are going to evaluate what has worked well and try to build on it. We also recognise that we need to make sure all pupils receive acknowledgement and feedback on their work. Until recently, we have been asking staff to focus on Years 10 and 12 for detailed feedback, but we will look to widen this as best we possibly can from September. We also want to try to be more consistent across and within departments about how we organise and present the

online work to pupils. For now though, please can I ask you to get your children to check their emails daily, as many do not seem to be responding to teachers' emails to them.

### **Examination Results days**

Parents of Years 11 & 13, please be aware that this year we are going to have to do this remotely. Keep an eye on your emails, and tell your children to keep an even closer eye on theirs please, as full instructions will be sent to you soon. This will involve all pupils receiving exam results in setting up their own Go4Schools account. We will also ensure we give really clear instructions for 'what to do next', and how to access advice and guidance in light of the results achieved.

Finally, I just want to say please continue to monitor and manage your children's school work. Getting the balance right between making them work hard, but at the same time not putting too much pressure on them, is very difficult. I still maintain that 3 good hours of independent study per day is a sensible expectation for most school aged children. But, you know your children, so feel free to use your own parental judgement to increase or reduce expectations, and to be as flexible as you need to be. For example, if they have worked really well over a few days there is no reason why they cannot have a day off to enjoy something different. As always, their health and well-being have to take priority, but of course we want them to make the best progress they are capable of.

Please get in touch if we can help in any way.

Yours sincerely

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