



11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents, carers and students,

Welcome back and what a great week it has been at Bridgewater, entirely made by the sheer enthusiasm and good will of our students coupled with the support of parents and the professionalism of colleagues. Never have I been able to say with such conviction that it's great to be back, so, thanks one and all!

One of the key challenges this week has been to ensure we have got the logistics of health and safety right, whilst prioritising education. I am really pleased to say that we think we have got that balance right. And key to this has been the overwhelmingly great behaviour of our students. They have loyally abided by all the different restrictions and one-way systems with an accepting "shrug of the shoulder" and appreciation that, if this is the new normal, we must just get on with it. It has made me and my colleagues really proud watching your sons and daughters just get on with things and I want to applaud and thank them for that.

Of course, there are going to be challenges ahead and it seems inevitable that there will be some choppy seas to navigate over the coming weeks. These will blow in some inevitable frustrations but if we show the confidence, optimism and sheer goodwill that we already have as a school community, I am certain we will get through it.

Top of my list of challenges at the moment is how any potential positive test is going to be managed within the school body. Whilst we will do everything we can to maintain as bio-secure a bubble as possible, we must brace ourselves for the potential of partial lockdown. To reassure you, in the event of any lockdown we will switch to live, online teaching through Microsoft Teams. Furthermore, individual students who have to self-isolate will be provided with links through the VLE.

Jockeying for position alongside any positive test challenge, is the nature of this year's GCSE exams and our catch-up strategy. Currently we have not received any exam update which is deeply frustrating for you and for us. However, as soon as we hear, you will hear. Furthermore, once the early logistics of the timetable have settled down, we will publish details of our after school catch up programme next week which will formally start on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September. To start with we will be prioritising Y11 students but we will then look to distribute catch up more widely.

On a practical note, there are a couple of reminders:

- Y9 and Y10 students should arrive for 8.50 allowing Y7,8 & 11 to arrive by 8.40 thereby preserving their bubbles
- Please bring your own equipment and wear the correct uniform
- Please do not come into school if displaying covid-19 symptoms but do inform us
- Please self-isolate if you live with someone who has symptoms and inform us. More guidance can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Finally, there are many things to reflect upon. But if we were ever able to make the best of a difficult situation, we have all shown this week that we can. Stay safe and many thanks for your ongoing support.

Regards

Tim Long