



Friday June 12th 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope that you are fit and well. I think we are all looking for some green shoots of recovery and I believe we have seen a few since half term with the gradual lifting of certain aspects of lockdown.

Over the last week in school we have been bringing in all teachers- on a rota and subject of course to social distancing, to start a process of reintegration. This has run alongside the Key Worker and Vulnerable Student timetable. The purpose of these training days has been to consolidate our expectations of online learning, share best practice and upskill colleagues where appropriate. We have also focused upon Health and Safety.

Meanwhile as a Leadership Team and as Governors we are engaged in all the routine activities you would expect as we plan for September. These include finalising the school's timetable and budget for the academic year 2020-2021, making new staffing appointments, planning the curriculum for September and most immediately, preparing for the gradual return of Y10 students.

Parents and carers of Y10 students will have received extensive guidance relating to their phased return from Mr Powell which is available on the website. Because of the restrictions imposed by social distancing, it would be wrong to claim that this is a return to normal teaching as we know it. However, what it is, is a first and very important step towards returning to some form of face to face schooling which we all want. If we get these first steps right as a school and as a country, hopefully we can then look forward to a further easing of lockdown.

It is important that we all learn lessons from online learning and online caring so that we can continue to improve the provision. Therefore, it is timely that the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has released some early findings into what strategies might have the greatest impact in terms of online learning. With many of you taking on the role of parent teachers at home- for which we are hugely grateful and appreciative, I thought you might be interested in reading some of the early findings. These can be found at:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/distance-learning-rapid-evidence-assessment/>

In terms of providing increasing levels of interaction, I would like to draw your attention to some of the things we have done or are planning to do. First, there was the Virtual Careers Day that took place on Wednesday this week. Notwithstanding a few technical issues, it proved a great success and we have received some very positive feedback. Meanwhile our "Bridgewater talks on..." series continues and is growing by the week, details of which are available through Showmyhomework. Meanwhile, events to look forward to are our virtual Tutor Day and virtual Sports Day details of which will follow.

Whilst my head rightly cautions too much optimism, my heart tells me that the horizon is starting to brighten and let's hope these remaining weeks mark the beginning of some return to normality. So finally and as ever, stay safe and look after yourselves.

Regards

Tim Long