



July 10th 2020

Dear Parents, carers and students,

As ever I trust you are fit and well. This week we took another great step forward in welcoming back many KS3 students for a face to face session. I am so pleased that we have been able to do this and I know my colleagues running the sessions have thoroughly enjoyed being able to touch base with your sons and daughters, so many thanks for supporting this if you were able to.

Last week. I mentioned that Ofqual, England's regulatory body for exams, is consulting regarding GCSE exams in 2021. This closes on July 16th and if you are interested in seeing some of their thinking here's the link <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual> . Last week I also I gave you the following link to the Government's guidance regarding the full opening of schools in September <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> Whilst many questions remain, I want to start giving you some answers regarding our current thinking in line with the overriding principles that:

- we minimise contact, preserve social distancing where possible & enforce robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- we deliver the best, full-time curriculum we can

Will we operate in bubbles? Yes. To start with, we will operate in whole year group bubbles which could, depending on what happens over the coming months, be broken down further into Stockton and Appleton bubbles and then potentially into single class bubbles. Our intention at the moment is that these bubbles will then occupy specific zones within the school with each bubble having their own dedicated playground area and entrance.

Will we stagger the start and end of days? Yes, we think we will. Currently we will have a normal start and finish time of 8.45 for one year group at Upper and two year groups at Lower. The remaining two year groups-one at Upper and one at Lower will start at 9.00 and therefore finish later at 3.10. This will have the least impact on the planned timetable and curriculum and allow us to run our remodelled Catch up Enrichment curriculum (see below).

How will we manage lunches and breaks? Students will have morning breaks in their zones. Lunches will be split. This is more straightforward at Upper where one year group will have lessons 1,2 and 3 as normal, then have lunch and then have two lessons after lunch. The other year will follow the normal pattern of 4 lessons, then lunch then period 5. Lower will be the same with the added complication that a third year group will have to start their period 4 and then after 30 minutes take their lunch and then return to complete period 4 before moving onto period 5.

Will there be an impact on teaching and learning? These steps are designed to minimise the impact on teaching and learning. There will be reduced access to some specialist rooms but colleagues are adapting their planning to take this into account and I am confident, therefore, that there will be minimal impact of the quality of education.

Another area I want to give some initial answers to is how we plan to use the Government's **catch up money** when we receive it. The link to the Government guidance is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time> . Essentially our plans are as follows:

- Provide catch up teaching during holiday periods next academic year and face to face tutoring
- Provide high quality online teaching material, forming the basis of online tutoring
- Remodel our Enrichment programme to provide a regular "period 6" for catch-up purposes

All year groups will have access to the catch-up programme with an emphasis, to start with, on Year 11 and Year 7. Alongside my Leadership Team and other colleagues, I anticipate a very busy August putting more detail on this plan. However, I trust this gives you confidence in our plans to hit the ground running in September. In the meantime, stay safe and enjoy the weekend. The video version of this can be found here: <https://youtu.be/5CygRjnCgbA>

Regards

Tim Long