

BISHOP HEBER HIGH SCHOOL

RESPECT · OPPORTUNITY · ACHIEVEMENT

Tuesday, 9th June 2020

Re: Wider opening of schools

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write to you to update you on our current situation following our Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting on Monday 8th June 2020.

I would like to start by outlining our current situation and context in these unprecedented times. On Monday, 23rd March formal education was stopped. The state education system became the childcare provider for the nation's key workers and vulnerable children and effectively school-based education closed. This meant that Bishop Heber's primary job was to work with the large number of families in these categories to support them at this time.

That said, we have like most schools, continued as much as possible to provide some form of educational support at home for all students, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for what you are doing to support your own children's education whilst at home.

As I've stated earlier, we are currently finalising Centre Assessed Grades for each Year 11 and Upper Sixth student, in addition to providing transition materials for both Year Groups in order to ensure that they are fully supported in successfully accessing their next steps. This is a massive task and completing this remotely has taken energy out of the system. I'm also pleased that we've managed to make over 1,500 welfare check phone calls to students and we look to repeat this in the coming six weeks to touch base with every student personally and ensure they're ok at this time.

As we made clear from the outset and in line with recent Government advice, our next priority has been Year 10 and Year 12 due to the increased impact that the Covid-19 lockdown is likely to have on their studies. Therefore, they are having work marked and there is greater contact (via email/INSIGHT) with these groups. As you can imagine setting up these remote lessons and keeping the students on track is far more challenging and time consuming than normal.

Once Centre Assessed Grades are submitted (Friday, 12th June), we can extend our focus more to Years 7-9 by developing our expertise for online home schooling such as using Microsoft® Teams more widely to enhance remote learning. Last week all teaching staff were in school familiarising themselves further with the potential of Microsoft® Office 365 for improved remote learning by building on some of the pilots that we have been trialling. Some teachers are now beginning to offer live sessions. I respectfully ask that parents do not sit-in on such sessions as it undoubtedly changes the dynamic within the session and the relationship between student and teacher. If my colleagues feel they are being critiqued in this way they are entitled to withdraw the live sessions offered. It is important that we retain this student - teacher relationship whilst acknowledging that we too are learners with this new delivery; it will develop rapidly in the coming weeks/months.

I am in contact with every Headteacher in CWaC as Chair of the Headteachers' Association. No comprehensive school in Cheshire West is routinely offering (video conferencing) to their students, as we simply don't have the capacity. That said, as I mentioned above, we have successfully piloted some on-line face-to-face contact and we are now hoping to roll these out more widely over the coming weeks ahead of the summer break.



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At the end of May, the Government stated that schools should plan for Year 10 and the Lower Sixth to be offered some form of face to face support to supplement their remote learning for the remaining part of the summer term, from Monday, 15th June. Therefore, as we move to organising this third element to our provision (i.e. childcare for priority groups including key workers; remote off site learning and now the wider opening of the school to onsite learning), we are now in a position to outline further what we hope we are able to achieve in the last five weeks of the summer term.

Years 7 – 9 will continue to have remote learning at home with a new round of work set for the remaining part of the term/year. Miss Windsor and our newly appointed Deputy Headteacher Ms Mort will be writing before the end of the week outlining the programme of work, including our current plans for the use of Microsoft® Teams with these year groups.

In terms of opening the school more widely for Year 10 and Year 12, we have decided that, in line with our partner primary schools and the majority of CWaC high schools, we will delay the start of the programme we have planned for Year 10 until Tuesday, 23rd June. We will review this date in an extra ordinary FGB Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 16th June when we hope that we will be more reassured that track and trace is in place locally and the regional issues such as R (transmission) rates will provide us with a greater confidence to open to more students. That said, we believe that aligned to other local sixth form schools and colleges, we can make the first steps to open more widely than at present, on Monday, 15th June with smaller groups of sixth formers following stringent social distancing practices. Mr Ridley Thomas will write to all Lower Sixth parents today with detailed timetables and to Year 10 parents by the 17th June to confirm our plans.

In the meantime, I am planning to send sixth form students and parents a recorded message by Thursday which will reiterate much of what is stated in their letter with practical examples of our expectations for opening the school to them in this phased way. A condition of any student returning to school at this time is that students must agree to the [Covid-19 Behaviour Code](#) and that, as parents you consent to have your child's details shared with other agencies should they or any person become symptomatic to support the track and trace programme nationally.

Whilst I'm deeply frustrated and regret that we are unable to open the school to all Year 10 and 12 students at the same time in the week beginning on Monday, 15th June, I hope you appreciate that we will continue to work tirelessly to put in place a programme in school that offers the greatest reassurance to everyone (staff, parents and students) and which minimises and mitigates, as far as possible, the risks involved as we learn to live with this virus for possibly months and years ahead.

Notwithstanding, I would state that we have a great staff supported brilliantly by yourselves and a Governing Body that cares deeply about supporting all our students. Our intentions remain that they will become the best they can be and continue to be happy and safe in this "new normal"

Take care,



Mr D A Curry



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