

# BISHOP HEBER HIGH SCHOOL

RESPECT · OPPORTUNITY · ACHIEVEMENT

Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## Re: Full Opening of School in September

Dear Parent/Carer,

We wanted to write to you to update you on our current situation following the Government's announcement on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July about the full opening of schools in September 2020. The Government's guidance has been published at gov.uk for both parents ([click here](#)) and schools.

It's remarkable to think that formal education was stopped on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March – over 114 days ago! In that time, we have continued to remain fully open as a childcare provider for the nation's key workers and vulnerable children and in recent weeks we have offered face to face sessions to all our Year 10s and Lower Sixth Formers which has given us a great deal confidence in moving safely to full opening in September.

The measures set out in the gov.uk guidance for schools ([click here](#)) provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for students and staff, which also ensure that all students receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all students back this autumn, schools have been asked to minimise the number of contacts that a student has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission. By following the guidance, we are confident we are managing risk effectively.

While our ambition is to have all students back at school in the autumn, every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how we will ensure continuity of education (e.g. blended learning). With this in mind, we have used this final week of the academic year to plan for the full opening in September ensuring we adhere to the guidance which we will share with you in this communication.

Naturally, the first week of the new academic Year 2020/21 will be different to support not just our new students to Year 7 and Sixth Form but to reintegrate all year groups and meet with our families ahead of formal lessons commencing on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> September.

Tuesday, 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Staff CPD Day
Wednesday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Year 7 Induction Day Year 8 – Sixth Form STEPs Appointments (8.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.)
Thursday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Year 7 – Sixth Form STEPs Appointments (9.30 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.)
Friday, 4 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 12 Induction Day Year 13 UCAS Day Year 7 STEPs Appointments (8.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.)

We have planned a recovery curriculum for all students for September following the gov.uk guidance to ensure we maintain a broad and balanced curriculum as much as possible for everyone, recognising that learning habits over this time have been different for all of us. We are also fully aware of our students' broader health and well-being and understand that students' responses to the period of lockdown have been mixed.



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Clearly, we have had to make several adaptations to ensure we can open fully and support students in September. For example, we will not be able to offer any food in our canteen at break and/or lunch times for any of the 1,300 students other than a sandwich meal to students entitled to a free school meal. Students will be expected to bring their own packed lunch, snacks and drinks for the day. We also hope we will have greater guidance on school transport (e.g. school buses) shortly and we will send more 'covid-secure' details before we start in September. Students will be expected to wear full uniform as normal. The longer 25-minute STEPs Meeting planned will be central to starting the year off well.

To minimise the risk of any transmission we will deliver our curriculum practically by reducing movement around the site with Year 7, 8 and 9 (KS3) being taught in the same group (bubble) each day. The zoning of KS3 will allow us to use specialist rooms for Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form and therefore reduce the movement of all 1,300 students around the school's one-way system to only three-year group bubbles. This approach will allow us to use our specialist teachers to deliver their subject to students as set out in each student's timetable with few restrictions on the curriculum provision. That said, naturally some subjects such as Music, P.E. and Drama will have to adapt their curriculum more to ensure we maintain safe practices.

To further minimise the risk of any transmission and support the curriculum delivery outlined in the paragraph above we will also have to change the shape of the school day temporarily. In essence, the day will start and end at the same time although there will need to be very prescriptive start and (staggered) end times each school day. The day itself will retain the five 60-minute lessons but we will have to rotate the extended 20-minute a.m. break as well as the 40-minute p.m. break to ensure all students are kept to one of three zones for social distance purposes. Fundamentally, the greatest change will be to the timings during the day with a later p.m. break (historically lunch time) for Year 10, 11 and sixth form with lessons being split for KS3 to accommodate the rotations – I will explain this in more detail in September.

This plan will be monitored and will be reviewed before the October half term. It will always be our ambition to return all students to being taught in specialist rooms but only when it is safe to do so.

We are planning to send students and parents a recorded message before we start in September which will reiterate much of what is stated with practical examples of our expectations for opening the school to all students in this phased and staged way.

For Year 9 students, many aspects of the final third of this academic year have been different. Overall, we are really pleased with the way that students have adapted to our new ways of working – in fact, we believe that they have mastered Microsoft® Teams really quickly and easily! All students have now begun work on their option subjects, and we have been impressed with the way that they have responded to the increased level of challenge that their recent GCSE transition projects have provided them with. Teachers are now working hard to provide feedback on this work. However, if your child has struggled with some of the work, please be assured that teachers will review and revisit the work that has been covered during the lockdown period.

Students have enjoyed the Year 9 weekly photo competition that has been running during lockdown and we have been delighted to send out lots of weekly prizes. Staff have also nominated students who have been working hard this year, or who have been kind or helpful to them at some point throughout Year 9. Praise postcards will be on their way to the recipients soon.



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Microsoft® Teams Tutor Group meetings have been taking place recently. We have enjoyed hearing about the many quizzes and discussions that have been taking place – it's clear that both students and their tutors have enjoyed having the chance to catch up in this way.

We would normally have held the End of Key Stage 3 Awards Evening in the School last month to celebrate the many academic successes that Year 9 have had during their three years at Heber so far. Clearly, we haven't been able to do that this year so we decided we would hold this celebration virtually and we hope you enjoy the video presentation which you will receive shortly. The accompanying trophies and certificates will be presented when possible next Autumn Term.

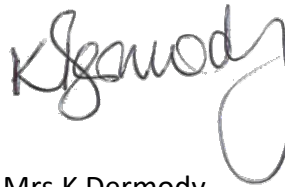
Please find attached a guide to supporting your child's return to Heber in September, which we hope you will find useful in preparing for the transition back to school along with a letter about the GCSE Book Bundles.

Finally, we are very much looking forward to supporting your child next academic year in what will certainly be another year of challenges for them, although hopefully all academic! We look forward to meeting you in person at the STEPs appointments on either Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> or Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

Take care,



Mr D A Curry  
Headteacher



Mrs K Dermody  
Year Leader – Head of Year 9



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## Re: GCSE Support Bundle

Dear Parent/Carer,

Every year the school organises a bundle of GCSE resources to support students with their GCSE courses. This ensures that all students have the most appropriate guide for their exam board and tier of entry, where applicable. In addition to the study guides students will also have access to online resources such as GCSEPod, Mathswatch, and Educake (Science resources). The bundle of materials is being offered at a significant discount as the school can buy in bulk and is not seeking to make any profit.

Some parents may raise the issue of a sibling already having purchased study guides. However, I would ask you to be mindful of the fact that exams and courses may have changed recently. Each Subject Leader has chosen the most appropriate resources for the GCSE courses 2020-22.

You are invited to collect your child's GCSE bundle following your STEPs appointment in September. We would ask you to make your way to the School Library where your child will be able to pick up their study guides.

Payment can be made in either a one-off payment of £90 or in instalments over the 12 months to July 2021. The link for the online payment system is [www.scopay.com/bishopheber](http://www.scopay.com/bishopheber). If you choose to pay in instalments, please ensure that full payment is made by Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

If you have any questions with regards to this initiative, then please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is [umort@heber.org.uk](mailto:umort@heber.org.uk).

I am confident that by taking up this offer students will get off to a great start to Year 10, fully equipped with the resources they need to develop their independent study and revision skills.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Ursula Mort  
Deputy Headteacher

### Useful contact information

GCSE Pod: [jmcwilliams@heber.org.uk](mailto:jmcwilliams@heber.org.uk)

Mathswatch: [cmcmullan@heber.org.uk](mailto:cmcmullan@heber.org.uk)

Educake: [sclark@heber.org.uk](mailto:sclark@heber.org.uk)

Finance: [finance@heber.org.uk](mailto:finance@heber.org.uk)



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## Tips to support your child's return to Heber in September

We are really looking forward to seeing your child back at Heber in September. However, we understand that the prospect of returning to school following lockdown may bring about a mixture of emotions in your child. We hope the following tips will help you to prepare your child for the transition back to school:

### 1. **Chat to your child about how they feel about returning to school**

Ask your child if they are worried or scared about anything. Whatever your child tells you accept, validate and normalise their feelings e.g. 'It's normal to feel this way. I bet there are lots of other people feeling exactly the same way.' Identify what your child can look forward to in order to encourage feelings of positivity.

### 2. **Reassure your child**

Talk with your child about ways they can stay safe at school, such as washing their hands regularly including before and after eating. Reassure your child that the school is putting measures in place to keep them safe.

### 3. **Re-establish a routine to help ease your child into school life**

It is likely that your family's routine may have changed during lockdown. Your child may have been waking up or going to bed later. In the week before their first day back at school, gradually get them back into their usual morning and bedtime routine, ensuring they get the right amount of sleep.

### 4. **Model coping strategies**

Model coping strategies you use when feeling stressed such as reconnecting with friends, doing regular exercise or using breathing techniques. If it applies, you could share your own worries and feelings about returning to work and ways you are managing these feelings.

### 5. **Establish a 'family feedback' time**

Establishing a time each day when your family share their worries from their day as well as their fun experiences, makes talking about feelings part of the normal family routine. This could work at dinner time or during a family walk.

### 6. **Seek support if you need it**

If your child does find the transition back to school a challenge, please let us know so we can work with you to support your child. In the first instance please contact your child's Form Tutor. You can do this by telephoning the Main School Office on 01948 860571. Alternatively, you can also leave a message on the 'Contact Us' page on the school's website.

If you have more serious concerns about your child's mental health please contact Mrs Vaughan (Inclusion Manager), or Ms Mort, Deputy Headteacher, and/or possibly your GP about the best next step/s.

You can also call the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Mental Health Crisis Line on 0300 303 3972.

We would also like to direct you to the Mental Health, Internet Safety and Safeguarding guide in the News section of the school's website, where you can find useful information to support you and your child with their good health and well-being – click [here](#).



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