

22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well and that you are enjoying slightly more social interaction and outdoor exercise, albeit limited and physically distant.

This letter is primarily for Year 10 parents and carers, but I thought it would be useful to share this update with all families, just for information regarding our decision-making process to date.

It is now almost two weeks since the Prime Minister's announcement that primary schools will be expected to open for some year groups from 1st June, and that there is an ambition for some face to face contact for students in Year 10. Since then, we have been promised further guidance specifically for secondary schools, but this has not yet been received.

Nevertheless, we have been working hard to prepare the school for the potential reopening for Year 10 and, following a robust risk assessment and action plan, I am confident that we are in a position to accommodate these additional students on a part time basis, once this specific guidance has been published and it is confirmed that it is safe to do so. Please be assured that we have considered all reasonable steps to mitigate the risks involved, relating to both the physical site and the provision we are able to provide.

However, you will be well aware of the national debate about safety in schools, which is likely to continue over the next few days and weeks. Today, the Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) issued their interim findings and concerns relating to the reopening of schools. Below is an extract from their draft report:

*"We believe that decisions on school opening should be guided by evidence of low levels of COVID-19 infections in the community and the ability to rapidly respond to new infections through a local test, track and isolate strategy. **There is no clear evidence that these conditions are met. Until they are it is not safe to open schools on June 1.....To ensure that any local outbreaks are quickly spotted and contained, we strongly recommend that local test, track and isolate programmes are in place and tested before schools re-open.....Delaying a school re-opening by two weeks (to 15th June) approximately halves the risk to children, and delaying the re-opening till September is less risky still. Staying at home at all time points is about half as risky as going to school, but also means that children do not get the benefit of having face-to-face learning and seeing their friends.**"*

The full report can be found here:

<http://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Independent-Sage-Brief-Report-on-Schools.pdf>

Excellence for all


The health and safety of all students and staff is, of course, my top priority, therefore we are not anticipating any Year 10 students attending school immediately after half term. Once we have more conclusive evidence and assurances that we would not be putting our community at any significant risk, our current plans can be adapted as necessary and put into action. At this point, I will share our proposals and gather the level of demand from those students and families concerned.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide in-school support for those students who are classed as vulnerable and/or who have parents/carers as key workers. This provision will be in place throughout half term and beyond. Please note that work will not be set during the holiday, either remotely or in school.

As ever, my heartfelt thanks go to the staff for being so willing to go 'above and beyond' in these circumstances, and of course to the governors, parents and the whole school community for your ongoing support, patience and resilience.

I hope you have an enjoyable bank holiday and week ahead.

With best wishes



Andrew Taylor
Headteacher