



19 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Can I again, take the opportunity to thank all parents who have been incredibly supportive and patient with us over the last week or so. I am so proud of our community and how we work constructively together and this is shown to be all the more true in times like these.

I have spoken to all students in College today in an assembly and will be writing to all those at home via email later on. I will attempt to share with you here where we have got to in our planning and thinking although there is still much information that has not been made clear to us at the time of the announcements last night.

School Closure

As of Friday, school will be closed to all but a few students. We will be asking parents to complete a survey to indicate which children of key workers or vulnerable groups are likely to want to take advantage of the repurposing of schools at this time, this will follow later in the day once the details are available. That way we will be able to understand what level of cover we will need next week and going forward.

We will continue to set work for all year groups as I have been clear with them that their school year and their learning does not stop simply because they are not physically with us. Most year groups will need the learning they are doing now and in Terms 5-6 for their future courses whether that is here at Heathfield or at other educational establishments. They cannot afford to have large gaps in their learning and so the remote working is really important.

We will be working with staff to ensure the total amount set is clear and proportionate. If your child is currently too unwell to complete work please let the class teacher know either by email or via a comment on the Firefly task, this will help manage concern about expectations around completion of work. Of course, we would expect recovery and return to work within a sensible timescale as part of a healthy approach.

For Year 11 and 13 this is a particularly difficult time. Their normal expectation around the end of their school phase has been disrupted through no fault of their own. We have limited time with them together but we will mark the moment with them tomorrow in some way. We will then look at what is possible later in the year. Clearly in light of the advice around gatherings all social events are cancelled. The year book and other leavers' arrangements were not fully finalised and so will need to be considered more. I cannot offer any update on these at this time but will do so when we are able.

Examinations

The blunt reality is that I do not yet know exactly what will happen to students regarding their examinations. I can tell you what I do know and what the options might be. I know that the



official statements have been carefully worded to say that examinations will not take place in May or June. This does not yet rule out a later examination season in July/August or other time if it is deemed possible.

The other alternative being discussed is some form of teacher assessment or prediction. In both cases the exam year groups need to continue completing the work and assessments set by their teachers now, either to continue to prepare for later exams or to provide evidence of the current standard of work that would form a realistic prediction. I am told we will know more tomorrow at which point I will update you accordingly.

Our Community

We will be planning, along with our local primary schools, what is likely to be required of us in the coming months and how we will manage that given our already depleted resources. We understand these circumstances are bigger than any of us individually and that we will all have our own anxieties and feelings about it, we are committed to working together constructively to see what is possible.

For those who are eligible for Free School Meals or a 6th Form Bursary, vouchers have been sent for those students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 12. Vouchers will be sent for Years 10, 11 and 13 tomorrow. These will provide support to these families up until Easter. We are hoping the government response will provide something that works for rural communities after that.

We have explained to the students that a range of emotions is normal and to be expected. We must all feel able to express our feelings and talk them through. Our pastoral teams will be checking in with students who we are already aware of as valuing this support, please let your Head of Year know if you feel your son/daughter is struggling at this time whilst understanding we are only able to work remotely.

For now, this is the summary of what we can communicate. We will be spending today planning further and update you tomorrow.

Finally, I have reminded students that our community, which we value so very highly, continues to be something unique and special, whether we are together in person or not. We will come through this, because we are strong and our students are magnificent, remarkable young people. The more we stay connected remotely and supportively the more we will retain everything of which we are so proud.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher