



29 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your family continue to stay well at this challenging time. As usual I have subdivided the information below so you do not have to spend time on aspects you do not find relevant. I also attach communication from East Sussex that I have been asked to pass on and an information sheet on home learning, which I should stress is not advice from us at College but some sensible ideas sourced externally, sent in goodwill.

Response to the Prime Ministers Announcement

The key announcements from parliament this week are as follows:

- The **earliest** schools might 'begin to re-open' will be Monday 8 March, which is the start of the third school week after the half-term holiday;
- There will be a plan/review set out on Monday 22 February (the first day after the half-term holiday), with further updates;
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will get two weeks' notice.

This means that we have several more school weeks of home-learning under the current arrangements. We are missing the students in College enormously but I hope that this at least provides some hope that there might be an end in sight, at least in terms of getting the children back into school.

We also received a clarification this week from the Department for Education (DfE) that schools would not be asked to open over half-term for children of critical workers.

Things we therefore still do not know include:

- The outcomes of the exam consultation which closes today (Friday).
- Whether some or all year groups are intended to go back at the same time.
- Whether there will be any advised changes to Covid precautions in schools.
- The arrangements for testing of students on return or prior to return.

Linked to this announcement and the variety of options for Term 4 that we need to plan for I need to inform you that **Friday 12 February will be a Planning Day** for staff. Work will still be set for students, they will have a fabulous programme of Super Curricular tasks to fulfill as well as any normal work set, but staff will be unable to be available live or to respond in real time as normal. Once the consultation for exams is concluded and announced then we will be building in further time in Term 4 to allow staff to plan. We will of course give you plenty of notice.



Distinguished School

Super-Curricular

We are thrilled to announce that the next Super Curricular fortnight will be launched on 8 February 2021. Last fortnight we had a record 344 entries and this time we know we'll get even more. Our Curriculum Leaders have worked hard to create engaging and enriching activities in their subjects for everyone to enjoy so we're excited to see what opportunities students take part in.

This is a fantastic opportunity that takes learning beyond the classroom and exams, for everyone to get involved in. But don't just take our word for it. Here are some quotes from the Autumn fortnight from the students:

"They were fun, exciting and kept me busy"

"I enjoyed it because it was something to do with family and friends"

or even simply *"I think the super curricular is amazing"!*

Remember every student who takes part received points for their Houses and there are even extra prizes for outstanding contributions. Closing date is on 26 February 2021.

Parents' Evening Dates and Year 8 Options Info

Following the cancellation of Year 8 Parents' evening, we have been in communication with the Parents' Evening provider and have assurances that the issues experienced have now been resolved. Therefore, we are very much looking forward to meeting Year 8 parents and carers on Thursday 4 February to discuss their child's progress.

We are currently confirming dates for the remaining Parents' Evenings this year and once we know that the system is robust enough to continue, we will communicate further dates in due course.

Sixth Form Applications

Year 11 students who have applied to study with us in Sixth Form have received communications this week regarding interviews. We would very much like to conduct these interviews face-to-face, therefore, we have taken the decision to postpone them until Term 4. Any plans put in place for the interviews will be able to be altered so that they can be conducted virtually if required. It is our aim to ensure that all interviews are completed before the Easter holiday. If you have questions about your application, or would like to apply, please contact Mr Evason: peavason@heathfieldcc.co.uk.

Remote Learning

Thank you for the enormously positive feedback we have had about the quality of remote learning. Our staff have learnt fast and are in many ways enjoying experimenting with what is possible to bring the best of the classroom into the virtual learning environment. We know there is a standard offer which is set out in our protocols and consistent across all classes, but I am also aware a number of our staff are going above and beyond this for their own and the students' enjoyment and benefit.

The professional training and sharing of ideas have been exceptional this week, we are now starting to look at ways we can increase the opportunities for collaboration or discussion in safe ways. We know this is what we are all missing. However, it all takes time and adjustment, as well as ensuring it is managed well. Please be patient with us as staff are learning a whole new way of doing what they do best.

We also know managing home learning can be hard. Some students are very self-motivated and well suited to home learning, others less so. We all know children come in many different and wonderful ways. Staff understand, as many are also managing this as well alongside their teaching roles. We understand you have to find the methods that work best for your family and have attached some simple recommendations from a variety of sources (not us!) that you may find helpful in establishing the rhythms that work for you.

The key message is if you are at all in doubt please contact us, but do so at an early stage - do not wait until you or your child are frustrated or stressed. We are always keen to help and most issues are resolvable quickly with positivity and patience.

Feedback

Building on much of the above we are keen to now gather feedback as we are four weeks into home learning. As stated above we are adjusting all the time but keen to understand and find ways to continually improve. We appreciate your time in completing a survey by going to the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScx2ubWjeSL6MleJMOLw11EgNsuIMFTDsTXZucBfjwxo_-DpQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

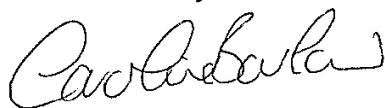
Well-being for a busy mind

As we come to the end of this week we would draw your attention to our Wellbeing step, Recognising and practicing emotions - the attached suggestion comes from our programme of Well-Being approaches... self-care for a busy mind.

Keep an eye on Firefly mid-way through next week for our Top Ten Wellbeing Tips for February.

Hopefully, this information is of interest and some use to you in navigating the weeks ahead. We are very keen to get the children back into College as soon as we possibly can to resume our happy vibrant community. In the meantime, you have our assurances that we are working to provide the best possible care and education that we are able to under the current circumstances. We are enormously grateful for your support which enables both our staff and our young people to work to their fullest potential.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher