

16th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this finds you and your family well.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for all your continued support during this very difficult time. I am so proud of the way that staff, students and parents/carers have all come together and worked incredibly hard to keep our students happy, healthy and learning throughout the last few months. It really has been a team effort and I believe it is a testament to the strength of our community.

We are very excited about the government's decision to have all students back full time from September. Clearly it will have to be different, but we have all missed working directly with your children. The government's final announcement on the guidance for the full opening of schools is due on 12th August and we will provide further details then, but I thought it would be helpful to share our current thinking now.

A thorough risk assessment for the safe reopening in September has been carried out, checked and agreed by the Governors, the Trust and Borough Health and Safety advisors. A copy of this risk assessment will be available on our school website, before the start of term.

To aid our preparations, the governors have agreed an additional Inset day on Friday 4th September, so all students will return on Monday 7th September.

To help your preparations we can confirm that, following the government guidance, students will return in full uniform, so please ensure it all still fits after six months in the cupboard. Please ensure that your child has a pencil case with all the appropriate equipment; pen, pencils, ruler, eraser, canister pencil sharpener, calculator and a highlighter, as we will not be able to lend equipment. Please make it a priority to check their usual travel route to and from school and talk to your children about how to keep themselves safe on their journeys to and from school. The government is advising that students walk or cycle wherever possible. We have extensive safe bicycle storage; please make sure they have a lock and cycle helmet. Space on public transport will be limited and there has been talk of only issuing oyster cards for students who live over two miles from the school, but we are waiting for further clarification on this issue. Currently all people travelling on public transport are required to wear a face mask, so please ensure your child has this if they plan to travel by bus or train.

From September, it is vital all children return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks students falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in school. The government has confirmed that school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means, from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply with fines in place for frequent non-attendance.

In September, each year group will be considered a bubble and they will be taught in those bubbles as well as having their break and lunchtimes in these bubbles, without mixing with students from other year groups. We are very fortunate in being able to offer a large area on the field for each

bubble and have contingency plans in place in case of wet weather. Staff will be able to work across the bubbles, as they will still be following strict social distancing measures.

There has been much debate nationally as to whether schools should be setting activities for students over the summer. We have thought long and hard about this and decided, due to the sheer length of time students have been away from school, we will provide some learning activities. It is important to us that our students enjoy their break and you have quality time together as a family, but we also appreciate six more weeks away from school may be difficult. We want to prepare the students so they are ready for full-time education in September, so as of Monday 20th, Year 7 and 8 students will be able to access Summer Challenges on Go4Schools and all students completing these challenges will earn PRIDE Points. Year 9 and 10 students can access 'Make It Stick' activities to help them organise the learning they have completed over the last few months into effective revision materials. The activities have been designed to be completed over the final three weeks, so that all students have had a complete break from remote learning for the first three weeks of the holiday. Students who have been receiving work packs will receive a Summer Pack via their year teams in the usual way

Unfortunately, due to current circumstances we have not been able to carry out our normal end of term events. The school has endeavoured to reward and recognise all students, who have been working hard during this period of remote learning. In keeping with tradition, we have also assigned an end of term assembly to every child on Go4Schools. The assembly recognises some of our outstanding learners and announces the all-important overall house winner for 2020. Please watch it: you won't be disappointed!

We are aware that some students will be nervous about returning to school and I hope that the measures outlined above will go some way to helping families feel safe for the new school year. Once the more detailed guidance has been published on 12th August, I will write to you again with more specific details for September and at this point you will have the opportunity to ask questions or give feedback as necessary.

I wish you all a healthy and happy summer holiday.

Take care.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Thompson." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MR. W. THOMPSON
Principal