



19 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we have welcomed students back into school this week we have also been continuing our planning for September. I will share these plans with parents and carers when we have further clarification from the Department for Education however in the meantime I can briefly share with you some changes that will be in place for the new academic year.

Split lunchtime

Firstly after a great deal of timetable organisation by Mr Barford, we will be moving to a split lunch arrangement next year. This will see Years 7 - 9 going for lunch at a different time to Y10 -11. All food offers will remain the same however as the school continues to grow it will spread out demand over a slightly longer period. Further details will follow shortly.

One way system

Again as we cater for our students needs we will be introducing a one way system around the main buildings at lesson changeover times including the start and end of each day. This will essentially make the best use of our narrow corridors and remove two way traffic on the stairwells. To facilitate this we have restructured the main entrances at the rear of both buildings and installed directional signs throughout the school. The new system will undoubtedly take some getting accustomed to however, I believe the longer term benefits are worth the initial problems associated with changes to existing practice.

Refurbished Sixth Form Study Provision

Over the past few months we have refurbished our Sixth Form Study area to offer better facilities and more modern look. Many thanks to Mr Dutton and the site team for all their hard work in completing this.

New Engineering Workshop

To meet increased demand of this popular subject a new Engineering workshop in Overpool building is being developed in A2 which is currently a textiles workshop. Miss Derry and her textiles room is being relocated into refurbished classroom O2 in Sycamore building.



New Science laboratory

To complete the relocation and redevelopment of our science department and cater for increased demand, a new science laboratory and prep area is being installed in the refurbished room O1 in Sycamore building. This will give the school thirteen specialist science laboratories in one area of the school.

All work will be completed by September.

YEAR 10 AND 12 PARENTS

I have been really pleased that the reopening to our Y10 students this week has gone so well. It was really good to see them back in school and engaging with staff. A school is a very different place when it has no students in and thus all staff involved this week have been so pleased to see our students back on site. Student behaviour and engagement was exemplary and as parents and carers you should be proud of them. I am looking forward to seeing them all over the coming weeks when they will be back in to enjoy academic study.

Thank you for the many positive comments and emails that I have received from parents and carers and for trusting us by allowing your children to come back in. The numbers who have attended this week exceeded the number we were expecting following our survey. We had planned for an increase without compromising our safety procedures set in place.

As discussed in my email last week, having completed the assessments for our Y11 and Y13 cohorts my focus is that we ensure that real consideration is given by government to how current Y10 and Y12 students will be externally assessed next summer. I have spoken briefly about this to Y10 students this week and assured them that I will do all I can to ensure fairness as we look ahead to the GCSE and A' Level Exams in 2021

I realise that parents, carers and students will be concerned and this understandable however at present Headteachers have had no information released to them or been part of any form of consultation. The government have strongly suggested that there will be examinations next summer but the type and nature have not been discussed. However, Sally Collier, Chief Regulator of QFQUAL said before the Education Parliamentary Education Committee earlier last week that there is clear indication that some modifications are very likely.

It is clear that there are a number of possibilities including reduction of course content within subjects, modifying examinations to allow a more flexibility in approach to student response to questions, a mixture of examined content and teacher assessment or, wholly teacher assessment. There could of course be a mixture of these or indeed something totally different, we simply do not know at this point.

I hope that there will be a consultation about this over the next few weeks as it is vital that staff and students are clear on what will be happening in the summer of 2021 so that modifications can be made as necessary for September 2020. Sally Collier also clarified that "Schools and teachers need to know very quickly, and exam boards, before the summer break ideally, as to what is going to happen in September".

As we await further information it is clear that students in Y10 and Y12 must keep up-to-date with the work that is being provided by teachers through our Google Classroom platform. Keeping on top of the work and seeking help when needed is the best way to prepare for future exams. Through this work completed by our students it will allow the school to collate evidence of standards achieved which in turn could form an important part of teachers' judgement should this be required again next year.

Over the past week or so we have noted the engagement with the work being completed on the Google Classroom platform. It is fair to say that student response has been varied with least engagement from Y10. We are aware that there have been some issues caused by various elements however please support the school by encouraging your child to engage in the on-line work as they should. Mrs Begbie has detailed later in this email our remote learning offer. Please support us to support your child to gain the very best from the assessment process next year.

URGENT - Year 11

Mrs Hill wrote to all Year 11 students and parents/carers asking that photos to be sent in so that we can create a Leavers' Video for them. To date, insufficient photographs have been received from students to make this worthwhile, so we are extending the deadline.

Photographs should be sent to kharris@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk by 28th June with a statement that permission is given for the photos to be used. We hope that more students (or parents) will have chance to look through their files and find pictures from school, with other Whitby students, on school trips, etc. that have been taken over the years.

COMING SOON - House Competitions

I am giving all students advance notice of The Whitby High School's House Competition Week, 6th to 10th July 2020.

This really positive whole school (virtual) event before the summer break will have something for all students and staff to get involved in and allow for some healthy Interhouse competition. All departments will be setting challenges for students during that week and we would like all students to take part.

Remote Learning & Google Classrooms

As you will be aware we have moved to Google Classroom for all subjects and all year groups now and this seems to be going well. We have had lots of positive feedback from parents/carers and students about this development. Mr Grant has produced some excellent YouTube tutorials for those accessing Google Classroom on computers here https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9sBIARYrztup6pOMIDPhd_sO5S3ccaju and for smartphones and tablets here <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9sBIARYrztv2FAjFyEIKz26V8dhlw7NF>.

Students should be completing 3-4 assignments each day using the variety of resources, video lessons and activities uploaded for them. They need to remember to check each of their subject 'boxes' on Google Classroom to see their assignments. Google Guardian Summaries of students' activity should arrive each Friday afternoon. If you have not yet received your invitation for these, please email Mrs L Begbie at LBegbie@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk

Mental Health for Children Returning to Schools

Please find below additional NHS mental health advice to parents/carers for children returning to school.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/06/top-nhs-doctor-issues-advice-for-children-going-back-to-school/>

Update about the DfE Digital Devices Programme

Thank you for your patience with this initiative. As you are aware the DfE launched two initiatives to provide digital devices for:

- Access to Children's Social Care services for children aged 0-19 with Social Workers and Care Leavers
- Access to Education for disadvantaged Year 10 pupils (not including Academies who received their own allocations)

After collating and checking the data from schools the local authority were then required to complete an on-line "forecast" survey for the Department of Education (DfE). The DfE initially allocated Cheshire West and Chester 765 devices for Children's Social Care and 170 devices for Disadvantaged Year 10s. This allocation is for all students in the county

Following a survey completed by schools it was identified that an addition 42 devices for the disadvantaged Year 10 students were needed. A request by CWAC for the additional devices was approved by the DfE and the allocation increased to 212.

Following the order placed by CWAC the authority did received notification from the DfE supplier at the end of May that the Social Care devices are expected to be delivered to Civic Way, Ellesmere Port later this month and will be delivered either to schools/settings or directly to families..

So far CWAC have been unable to order the disadvantaged Year 10 devices. This is because the ordering portal is not currently open to them and they have not yet received notification from the supplier that these devices are ready to be ordered. CWAC inform me that this is being queried with the DfE and orders will be raised as soon as we have that notification. When I have further information I will contact parents and carers directly.

Contact with School

It is important that through these difficult times we keep communication between students and school open. I would like to stress again that if students are struggling or have any concerns generally or about their work, they should be keeping in touch with their Form Tutors, HPMs and teachers through emails or contacting school generally.

As parents/carers, we would like to ask you to inform us of anything that you think is important particularly with regards to your child's wellbeing. We need to have an overview about such things as **bereavements, whether Covid-19 related or not** plus things that may have happened over the Lockdown that you believe we should be aware of. Please continue to inform House Progress Managers so that appropriate support can be put in place on their return to school.

Please can I remind you that when emailing school about specific information relating to your child, **we will not respond to emails sent from a company or business email address**. We will only respond to specific child related queries that come to us from a personal email address related to that child. I am sure that you will appreciate that by responding to an employer based email address this could breach GDPR regulations and safeguarding best practice – potentially putting your child at risk.

Careers

Paula Owens will be 'in' school on 2nd July. At the moment all her telephone appointment slots for that day are taken I also have a waiting list.

She is next due 'in' school on 9th July. If you would like to speak to Paula please let me know, I will allocate appointments and email students the details as soon as I can. If you ask for an appointment please keep checking your school email.

aconnor@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk

Higher Education

During a Higher Education training event I found out that students who have applied to Higher Education and for a student loan will have used a household income figure based on last year's household earnings. If, in the current situation, the household income has been reduced e.g. due to redundancy, furloughing this may be taken into account and a recalculation carried out. This **may** help some students to access more financial help.

There is more about this on the Student Loan Company website

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-prospective-students>

Cheshire College South and West

Cheshire College South and West have this week offered online sessions for people who may be interested in studying with them. Years 11 to 13 have been informed of this and hopefully visited some of the sessions. At the beginning of July some of our year 10 students were due to attend the Secondary College. This is a chance to visit, meet staff, find out about courses and see the facilities on offer. Due to the current situation this event has now been moved 'online'.

This means it is available to all Year 10 students who want to visit. College will be sending more information, a link and a password for our students in week commencing 29th June Please look out for this information.

College are likely to close applications in a few weeks so please don't leave it too late to apply. I will let people have an exact date when I have it.

Mental Health Support

Please see the following links for schools during the lockdown period. The Mental Health Crisis telephone line is provided by CWP and is accessible 24/7.

The myHappyMind Light Programme is a free resource for all primary schools and is also available for Early Years settings. The attached impact report and school leaflet are from myHappyMind, which is the emotional health and wellbeing platform currently being piloted in 24 Primary Schools in West Cheshire.

Schools registration link: <https://myhappymind.org/light-enquiry>

Coronavirus testing eligibility and how test and testing kits work

Guidance on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test, how to get tested and the different types of test available can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has published guidance for members of the public and patients about coronavirus tests and testing kits, including information on the different types of tests available and how they work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-tests-and-testing-kits-for-coronavirus-covid-19-work>

Critical Workers

Children of critical workers are encouraged to attend school, and to reflect plans for wider opening of schools from 1 June, at the earliest. Updated information defining vulnerable children, in line with existing guidance, for the purpose of continued education.

[Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings](#)

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the helpline.

Updated handwashing advice

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides. The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

The e-Bug project is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene. E-Bug has published posters on hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes, to display in bathrooms, classrooms and shared spaces.

The hand and respiratory hygiene posters and other educational resources can be found here: <https://e-bug.eu>

I hope that you are all well and thank you for your continued support.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Heeley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr B Heeley
Headteacher