



12 May 2020

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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you are continuing to keep safe and well and managed to enjoy the Bank Holiday weekend. There have obviously been significant developments in the government's Summer Term plans for schools over the last 48 hours and I wanted to share with you what we are currently aware of as a school in order to keep you as informed as possible as parents at what is a very complex time for everybody.

Childcare Provision

At present the government have not made any changes to the categories of children who are eligible to attend our childcare provision, stating that it should be 'vulnerable' children and children of 'key workers' who attend. The intention appears to be for this provision to run for the next two weeks, over the half-term holiday and until the end of this term on Friday 17th July in the first instance. Please do use the contactportal@helsbyhigh.org.uk address to contact us over this provision, particularly if you would like your child to attend over the forthcoming half-term holiday (including the Bank Holiday on Monday 25th May).

It is important to note that this provision will remain as 'childcare' provision, providing children with access to IT facilities in order to complete the on-line learning set for all students, and also that students accessing this provision do not receive any extra 'teaching' or other educational provision.

Years 7, 8 and 9

Despite overall national plans for schools this term which have been described as 'ambitious', no plans have been made for the return of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 before the end of this term. We are therefore assuming that these students will not now return to their classrooms until at least September and we have started planning accordingly.

Teaching staff are reviewing their long-term schemes of learning and making rearrangements where necessary to ensure that the most appropriate topics/concepts for Year 7, 8 and 9 remote learning are covered during the next half-term. Hence the learning set from Monday 1st June onwards will be new and important learning - consolidation of prior learning for the next 7 weeks would not be an effective use of learning time - but we will ensure that it is accessible. For example, work will not introduce new, previously-unseen key concepts or ideas - if those had been planned for Summer Term classrooms then they will be put back in our schemes of learning to next year. As previously we will be grateful for all the support and assistance that parents will provide and will ensure that revisiting the work they complete at home is part of their planned curriculum in school from September.

We will continue to provide as much support for Year 7, 8 and 9 students learning at home as possible, although it is important to note that in the likely event that more teaching staff are working in school in June/July it may not be possible to continue class teacher support in the way we have been doing to date. We will however make and communicate alternative plans to provide the same levels of support if the need arises. This uncertainty over staff availability and also our awareness that not all students have access to the IT facilities which would be required means we do not currently plan to introduce the use of 'live' or 'video' lessons for Key Stage 3 students.

Years 10 and 12

The following is the Department for Education's guidance for our work with students in Years 10 and 12 this term:

"For pupils in year 10 and 12, we are asking schools and colleges to supplement remote education with some face to face support for these year groups from 1 June. We do not expect these pupils to return to school or college on a full-time basis at this stage, and so we do not expect a full timetable to be offered as schools and colleges look to minimise the number of pupils in school or college each day. Schools and colleges should consider how to best use additional year 10 and 12 time to support those pupils who are starting their final year of study for GCSEs, A levels and other qualifications next academic year."

Schools are currently awaiting further guidance and interpretation regarding what this might look like in practice and we will write to Year 10 and 12 parents as soon as we have any further information and plans to share.

Years 11 and 13

Not unexpectedly there are no plans nationally for Year 11 and 13 students to return to school this term.

Hopefully I will be able to provide further information on many of the above aspects towards the end of this week or at the start of next week. In the meantime, learning activities will continue to be set using ShowMyHomework for all students until the end of this half-term on Friday 22nd May. We will not set any over the half-term holiday in order to enable students to catch up on their work and equally, if not more importantly, have a well-earned break.

It has been much-observed in recent days that coming out of 'lockdown' and adjusting to a 'new normal' will be incredibly complex in all areas of life, and schools will clearly be no exception. We are very sad that we won't see our Year 7, 8 and 9 students again this academic year and fully appreciate the challenge ahead for them and their parents with another half-term of 'home-learning' and then what is likely to be a restricted summer 'holiday' before there is any chance of a return to school. We will continue to do everything we can to provide and support purposeful and engaging learning for those students in the coming weeks. For Year 10 and 12 students, behind the simple intention expressed above lies the very complex challenge of ensuring that the school building is a safe environment for all students and staff and much planning and communication will be required to make the intention a reality. Hence we remain very grateful for all the on-going understanding and support from our parents as we work together to try to support our young people at this most testing of times.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher