



Head Teacher:
Martin Hill B.Sc. Hons, NPQH
Chester Road, Helsby,
Frodsham WA6 0HY
Tel: 01928 723 551
Email: head@helsbyhigh.org.uk
www.helsbyhigh.org.uk

29 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students have been able to enjoy a very sunny half-term break, with glorious weather continuing to be a theme of the unusual times we are currently experiencing. Life has been challenging for everybody in many different ways over the last couple of months and so I hope families have been able to take a break and enjoy a little rest at some stage this week.

Although I have got into the habit of writing at the end of each week whilst we are a school working apart, sometimes at the moment a week seems like a long time and things can change quite quickly. Last week I was telling you how the Local Authority had advised its schools not to re-open until Monday 8th June at the earliest, then on Sunday evening the Prime Minister announced plans which were finalised yesterday afternoon with confirmation that the 'five tests' to enable the gradual adjusting of lockdown had been met, with the intention that "on the 15th June, secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for Years 10 and 12." Hence we are beginning to cautiously plan to welcome back some of our students in the coming weeks, a moment which I am sure students, parents and staff alike will have been looking forward to for what seems like a long time.

As Monday represents the start of another unusual half-term, I just wanted to provide a brief overview of where we are up to in terms of the school's working at this time:

Childcare Provision

Having been open during the half-term break, our provision for vulnerable students and children of key workers is likely to remain open throughout the next half-term. Please use contactportal@helsbyhigh.org.uk to request further details and/or make enquiries.

Free School Meal Vouchers

The government announced two days ago that vouchers would be issued for this week. Hence we have ordered vouchers for eligible families which should be available to access as soon as possible. We will continue to use the national voucher scheme during the forthcoming half-term.

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9

Despite the gradual adjusting of national lockdown arrangements, there are no plans for the return of students in Years 7, 8 or 9 until September. As previously described we have re-planned our curriculum for the next 7 weeks and will continue to set and support learning via ShowMyHomework from Monday onwards. Thank you in advance for the support you will provide with this - as previously, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if we can provide any further assistance at any stage. As has also been the case throughout this difficult period, students (and their parents) should continue to feel proud of all the learning that they will do at home and not feel guilty at all if any tasks are not fully completed for any reason.

Years 10 and 12

Given the understandable concern that next summer's GCSE and A-Level examinations are now only a year away, it is the government's intention that the learning from home being undertaken by students in Years 10 and 12 should be supported, guided and assessed by some "face-to-face contact" with their teachers from 15th June, with the proviso that not more than 25% of students in these cohorts are in the building at any one time. Hence we will continue to set learning via ShowMyHomework for the next two weeks in the first instance, but also begin to make plans for our in-school provision from the 15th. We will be in touch with parents of Year 10 and 12 parents over the next two weeks and although I completely understand the anxiety that will accompany a return to the school building, please be reassured that the safety of students and staff will be our top priority and we will share in advance all the measures put into place and required by students to ensure we can safely welcome them back to the school.

Years 11 and 13

Students in Years 11 and 13 will continue to be able to access learning which both completes their courses and also supports the transition to the next stage of their education and lives. Please do let us know if we can support this process in any way at any stage. Over the Bank Holiday weekend, Ofqual published its final arrangements for the awarding of GCSE, A-Level and vocational results this summer, along with a consultation on the arrangements for GCSE and A-Level examinations in the Autumn Term for students wishing to try and improve on any of their awarded grades. We will write to Year 10 and 12 students next week with full details of both these publications, although in the meantime the following link takes you to the relevant Ofqual documentation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/exceptional-arrangements-for-awarding-qualifications-this-summer>

Thank you again for your support with all of the above and please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at any stage, particularly as arrangements inevitably get more complicated as we move on from the very challenging, but straightforward, position of everybody working from home. The second half of the summer term is always a long one, with end-of-year examinations, Year 6 transition and various other end-of-year events all usually making it a very busy one too. This year it won't be a typical final half-term of the school year, but it is likely to equally demanding - just in very different ways to normal. Hence before it starts, I hope you are all able to enjoy the sunshine this weekend before settling down to a new half-term on Monday morning.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher