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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students have had a good week, whether they have been working in school or at home. I also hope that all of our families are continuing to keep safe and well and are enjoying the undeniable sense that aspects of life are beginning to return to what we once thought was normal and that a return to school for all of our students is now not too far away.

Since my last letter, written at the end of last week, the government have of course stated that they are "signed up ... to bring every child back, in every year group, in every school" in September. We still await further details regarding these plans and will let parents know about them as soon as they become available. I have to say that I have sympathy for those tasked with developing these plans on a national basis. Parents, teachers and headteachers understandably want to know before the end of this term what will be happening in September and yet that involves having a knowledge of what the national coronavirus situation will be like in over two months' time, something that has been very difficult to gain since the beginning of this crisis earlier this year. In the context of a rapidly-changing global pandemic, two months is a very long time.

Although the government have made their intentions relatively clear, they have stopped well short of saying that schools will immediately return in September to how they once were pre-Covid. When different year groups will start back, whether they will have the freedom to access all of their subjects and all areas of the building, whether they will all start and end their school day at the same time and whether they will all have their break and lunchtimes at the same time are just some of the many questions for which answers are eagerly awaited. I have to say at this point that it is entirely possible that this term may finish on Friday 17th July without all of these answers being known and that it may well only be during the latter stages of the summer break that the picture regarding September becomes completely clear.

'Vulnerable Student and Key Worker Children School'

Please do continue to use the contactportal@helsbyhigh.org.uk address to access our 'childcare' provision. Although it has yet to be officially confirmed it is thought that this national provision is not likely to be extended beyond the end of this term and that the government do not feel that the national Covid-19 situation is currently such that 'key worker' provision needs to be made available in schools over the summer holidays.

'Year 10 and 12 Supported Home Learning School'

A huge 'well done' and 'thank you' to our Year 10 students who have returned to school for one day each this week, and to our Year 12 students who have completed their second such week in school. We have been so impressed with their maturity and the way they have adapted to some very different ways of working in school. Staff have been genuinely thrilled at

how much work they have done whilst they have been away from the building and in reviewing their home-learning, my colleagues have been delighted at how successfully they have learned many of the topics and concepts covered at home. As a result, we are very confident that they remain in a strong position to achieve success in 2021. They may feel that they have fallen behind since March, but actually compared to many other students in many other schools they may actually have got ahead during lockdown as a result of the diligent commitment of students, parents and staff.

It is also worth mentioning that we expect to hear soon about proposals for GCSE, A-Level and vocational examinations next summer - their timing (late July has been mooted in the press this week), style (maybe modular to reflect the fact that different schools have completed different units in some subjects?) and content (with maybe a reduction in expectation of what can be covered in Years 10 and 11?). Once again we will let you know as soon as we become aware of any national proposals and/or plans.

'Remote Learning School'

Thank you once again for all the support and guidance given to our students as they continue to progress their learning from home. The end of the Summer Term is always a time when some very different activities take place in schools and hence we are planning a variety of different 'virtual' events to mark the end of term. Further details will follow over the next couple of weeks.

Free School Meal Vouchers

I am sure you will be aware that the government have recently agreed that the provision of vouchers in lieu of Free School Meals not being currently taken in school will continue over the summer break. We will continue to order these vouchers for all eligible families until the end of August - it is likely that one £90 voucher will be issued for the 6 weeks of the holiday rather than 6 separate £15 vouchers. Unless we are directed otherwise by the government, we will also continue to order the vouchers for Year 11 students, even though officially they leave the school roll on 30th June.

Form Tutor Phone-Calls

Over the next week or so, every parent of a student in years 7, 8, 9 or 10 will be receiving a phone-call from their form tutor. The call will be intended to see how students are as we come towards the end of this term and if there is anything we can do to provide support over the summer and as we anticipate a return to school in September. Hence please do not worry if you notice a 'missed call' from the school over the next couple of weeks - it will be the tutor having called. Where it is felt that any extra support might be needed, there is also capacity in school for further conversations or meetings in school before the end of this term on Friday 17th July.

Thank you once again for all your support and understanding as we work together in such unusual and unexpected circumstances. It has been such a lift for staff to see so many of our Year 10 and 12 students over the last couple of weeks, but we are very mindful of how difficult it must be for our younger students to continue working away from their friends and teachers at home. Hence please do keep in touch via the various routes of communication set up and do please let us know if we can help in any way at any stage. In the meantime, I hope all of our families have a very enjoyable final weekend of June.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher