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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students and yourselves are well and have had a good week. Thank you once again for all your support of our students whilst they continue working from home in a manner that would have seemed difficult to believe six months ago. All being well, they will only have to work from home in this way for one more school-week and this week's update will focus on both next week and our on-going preparations to welcome back all of our students in September.

Next Week

Please note that our vulnerable and key worker student provision will continue to run next week, whilst our current Year 10 and 12 provision will also run for its final week.

Rather than setting and supporting our remote learning on a lesson-by-lesson basis next week, as we have been doing up until now, our on-line provision will instead enable a variety of activities to be accessed in an attempt to recreate the 'feel' of the final week of the academic year, which is always a very special time in schools:

- In 'normal' times we would have had a 'Futures' Activities Day next week. Instead we are having a virtual 'Futures Week', with students from all year groups (including Years 11 and 13) encouraged to access a wealth of careers information linked to their subjects. Older students will also be given interactive resources to help them understand their choices regarding apprenticeships and universities. Daily reminders of activities for all students will be posted on ShowMyHomework.
- There will also be a virtual 'Sports Week' next week in lieu of the usual summer term Sports Day in school. Students will be encouraged to take part in 5 events each and send footage to their tutors as forms battle it out to be their year group champions.
- There will be Celebration Assemblies for students to view: Year 7 from Monday; Year 8 from Tuesday and Year 9 from Wednesday. Year 10 will have their Celebration Assembly each morning in the Dining Room on the day they are in school.
- It will be an opportunity to 'catch up' on any outstanding tasks from this half-term.
- It will be an opportunity for students to begin looking at the optional learning activities which we will provide for our students over the long summer break if they are looking to continue with a little bit of learning during that time.

Full details of all the above will be posted on ShowMyHomework. Thank you for your support of these different and hopefully enjoyable learning experiences.

Summer Holiday

Although nothing is the same as usual this year, next Friday does mark the start of the summer break and students (and parents) will hopefully enjoy a restful break after what has been a difficult few months. As mentioned above we will provide some activities (via ShowMyHomework) for over the summer.

Results Days: A key point in each summer break are the Year 13 and Year 11 Results Days. Details of these events on the 13th and 20th August respectively, which will still take place in school this year, will follow next week via letters home to Year 13 and 11 parents/students.

Free School Meal Vouchers: Please note that a single £90 voucher will be made available shortly for each eligible student from all years (including Years 11 and 13). This will be done via the national Edenred scheme which has been in operation since Easter.

September

Although we will need to wait until the second half of the summer holiday to be able to finalise many of our plans in detail, with an up-to-date awareness of the national Covid-19 picture at the time (hence please do check e-mails regularly from Monday 10th August onwards), we have made several initial decisions regarding the start of the Autumn Term which I wanted to share with parents at the earliest opportunity:

Term Dates: We intend the first day of the Autumn Term for students, Wednesday 2nd September, to be for Year 7 and 12 students only, with all other students starting back the following day on Thursday 3rd September. I appreciate that for our current students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 this is a day later than originally scheduled but thank you for your understanding that we feel this is something which we should do for the benefit of our new Year 7 students. Current government guidelines have prevented them from coming into school this term and hence many of them will be stepping into the building for the very first time on 2nd September. Having one day in school on their own will enable them to experience some of the transition activities we usually would have done this term and also to get used to the building in a small way before the arrival of over 1,000 older students the next day. Year 12 students will also be able to enroll in our Sixth Form on Wednesday 2nd September. Please note that we do not intend to make any other changes to the planned term and INSET dates for next year.

School Day Timings: We are not currently aware of, or intend to make, any changes to the timings of our school day, with school scheduled to start at 8.45am and end at 3.05pm for all students.

Extra-Curricular Activities: The need to focus on supporting students on their return to classrooms, and also to ensure that extra-curricular provision is in line with the same groupings used during the school day, means that we not be commencing our usual extra-curricular provision straightaway at the start of the Autumn Term. Thank you in advance for your understanding that we feel the start of this provision should be delayed by a couple of weeks in September.

Uniform: Although blazers and ties can continue to be ordered via our school website, our current visitor policy does not allow them to be collected from school. In light of the difficulties this year in ordering, collecting and potentially changing these items, school uniform in the first instance in September will initially consist of shirt, trousers/skirt and shoes only. Once we are sure that all families have had the chance to get fully sorted with uniform then we will move to the wearing of full uniform later in September.

2020-21 School Calendar: As with all aspects of life at present, we are currently assessing the implications of the national Covid-19 picture for school events such as consultation and information evenings for parents in the new academic year. We will be in touch regarding these early in the Autumn Term once we feel we are in a position to confirm plans.

Much more information will follow in late August but hopefully the above is helpful in terms of enabling our families to begin making plans for their lives in September. The safety of both students and staff is our top priority and hence we not want to share detailed plans now which might be out-of-date by September (which is still over 6 weeks away) - hence the need to wait until mid-August onwards for the full detail. Our Covid-19 Risk Assessment for our current in-school Year 10 and 12 provision was this week reviewed by the Local Authority, who reported that "it was good" and that they could "see that the school has given careful thought how best to protect staff and pupils". Hopefully this is of reassurance to all parents as we look ahead to the full re-opening of school in September.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any queries at all via the usual routes of communication. All of our e-mails will be monitored throughout next week and then at regular intervals over the summer holidays. We understand that the return to school will not necessarily be straightforward for all students and parents and hence are determined to continue to support our families as much as we can over the next few weeks. In the short term, with the sun scheduled to make a welcome re-appearance over the next few days, I hope that you have an enjoyable weekend and I would like to wish all of our students a very pleasant final week of a very extraordinary summer term.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher