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26 April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students had a very relaxing and enjoyable Spring Break after a very challenging Spring Term. The new term has got off to a good start and, with the national Covid picture encouraging, hopefully in time this term will see a change in emphasis from short-term management of the virus threat to a longer-term focus on students' progress ahead of September.

Certainly this letter will cover both the management of risk in school and the above described focus on longer-term progress. I suspect that it will give the impression of a very busy term, for both students and staff.

Face-Coverings

Thank you for your support with the wearing of face-coverings once again in classrooms by students, which the government have said will continue until 17th May in the first instance. Unfortunately, this directive was put in the context of schools continuing with all present control measures until that date and so any other changes to how we are operating will also occur on that date at the earliest. Parents will know that we are keen to enable all students to access specialist classrooms at some stage this term, although that change would inevitably lead to greater movement around school and so would need to be supported by an easing of restrictions in schools (and/or wider society).

Lateral Flow Device Testing

Thank you for continuing to support participation in the Lateral Flow Device testing programme. A reminder that it is very important that the twice-weekly tests are taken on a Monday and on a Friday morning in order to minimise the number of students who would need to go home in the event of a positive test result. A positive test result on a Monday morning wouldn't lead to any in-school contacts being identified as the previous two days would have been over the weekend. A Friday morning positive test would result in close contacts from the preceding Wednesday and Thursday having to go home, but there is a chance that they could only miss that one school day if the subsequent confirmatory PCR test result came back negative at some stage over the weekend.

Please use the contactportal@helsbyhigh.org e-mail address to alert us to any positive results at any time, from either Lateral Flow Device tests taken at home or if a PCR test is taken as a result of a student having one or more of the Covid symptoms.

Year 11 and 13 Assessment Window

After the long wait for guidance and supporting materials, the last of which were received last Monday, we were able last week to finalise plans for Year 11 and 13 assessment tasks over the next 5 weeks in order to complete the generation of the evidence which will inform grade-awarding this summer. A recording of last week's Information Evening on this can be found at <https://www.helsbyhigh.org.uk/assessment-information-evening/>

After all that they have been through during their GCSE, A-Level and vocational courses over the last 14 months, I know that all parents would want to join me in wishing our Year 11 and 13 students all the very best for the next 5 weeks. Schools are all operating in slightly different ways in their work with Year 11 and 13 and so they should not worry about what other schools are doing - they are not actually competing against students from other schools but instead individually showing us the results of all their hard work over the last two school years.

The key to this summer's arrangements is that schools have been empowered to create assessments which take into account the disruption to their own students' studies and the impact on curriculum coverage of the two school closures and the Autumn Term self-isolations. My colleagues have worked very hard over the last few weeks to do this and hence this is one of many reasons why students should be confident ahead of the assessment window.

Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 Assessment Windows

Years 11 and 13 aren't the only students undertaking important assessments this term and all students will have assessment windows leading to the provision of a progress data report and a virtual consultation evening. Indeed, this started with the Year 10 assessment window last week.

Please see below for key dates for all of these year groups:

| Year | Assessment Window | Progress Data Report publication | Parent Consultation Evening(s) |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 7 | w/b Monday 14 th June | Monday 5 th July | Thursday 8 th July (4-7pm) |
| 8 | w/b Monday 7 th June | Wednesday 30 th June | Thursday 1 st July (4-7pm) |
| 9 | w/b Monday 14 th June | Monday 5 th July | Tuesday 6 th July (4-7pm) |
| 10 | w/b Monday 19 th April | Monday 10 th May | Tuesday 11 th (5-7pm) or Thursday 13 th May (5-7pm) |
| 12 | w/b Monday 7 th June | Wednesday 23 rd June | Thursday 24 th June (4-7pm) |

Further details on all aspects of the above will be provided in due course at the appropriate time for different year groups.

I hope that the above provides a helpful overview of our present and future work this term. As always, please do get in touch with us if at any time you have any queries about the above or any other aspect of school life during this very unique academic year.

Very best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher