

## Headteacher Message (12<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope this latest update finds you and yours safe and well.

From the start of this crisis, I have endeavoured to regularly touch base with parents and carers to communicate and share what the schools plan for educational recovery looks like.

As we enter what feels like the next phase in terms of school re-engagement, I felt this was a good time to give you all a further update.

The safe return of children always has been and always will be the main driver in terms of decision making around schools reopening. However, as a parent myself, I am aware that many of you might be a little confused by recent announcements from Westminster as to what that might look like for your child and that is why I would like to take this opportunity to clarify our current school re-engagement plans and share thinking on what future re-engagement plans might look like in September, but must stress that all plans are subject to change for obvious reasons.

While we are looking forward to welcoming back our young people, it is important we get the right balance between the importance of getting pupils back into the classroom and doing this in a way that is as safe as possible.

It is also important that we do this in a manner that ensures parents, pupils, and staff all have confidence that it is safe to return.

At Our Lady and St Bede our robust risk assessment planning reflects the current provision for vulnerable and key worker pupils, the school re-engagement plan for current Year 10 pupils which starts from 15<sup>th</sup> June and as of yesterday, we are starting to look at how we can creatively realise the governments ambition for all children to be back in schools from September.

I must point out to parents that at this stage, before I can share a detailed plan around what your child's in school educational offer might look like in September, more clarity is needed from the Government, particularly around how a return to school for all children is to be achieved with the current 2 metre social distancing rule in place.

Whilst as a school we have worked on various models of what that might look like for September, my feeling at this point is that remote learning in some shape or form will most likely be with us for a while yet.

If social distancing rules remain at 2 metres then we would be looking to some kind of blended learning model from September for our pupils which would involve a mixture of in-school lesson delivery combined with some on-line delivery.

At this point and until further directives are given from the Department for Education and Public Health England, particularly around the percentage of pupils allowed in school buildings at any one time and social distancing advice based on the R number, we will keep refining the September plan and make sure we share it with parents and carers as soon as possible.

In terms of planning for the remainder of this term:

### **Year 11 Pupils**

All Year 11 pupils should have now received their letter detailing plans around a proposed celebration evening and support with destination choices and signposting to resources.

The letter also details the school's intention to open to Year 11 pupils on 20<sup>th</sup> August which is GCSE results day. Nearer the time you will all individually receive details of health and safety protocols including your school point of entry and allocated time slot for that day.

Once again, please rest assured that as a school, we are doing everything we can to support pupils through their transition from school to the next stage of their education and are working closely with local providers to facilitate this.

### **Year 10 Pupils**

Schools in England will start to re-open from 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as instructed by the DfE to... "offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10".

Our Year 10 pupils should now have received their letter detailing the protocols we will deploy at Our Lady and St. Bede to safely facilitate face-to-face support for each pupil this term.

Remote education through Teams will continue to be utilised for the remainder of this term to address any identified knowledge gaps or issues and packs of summer work will be provided in a hard copy format before the end of term.

### **Year 7-9 Pupils**

I am hopeful that the media frenzy will force the conversation at the highest level so that we have a clear road map and clarity around what the next phase looks like in schools for pupils in Years 7-9.

While it is the Government's ambition that all pupils return to school in September, I think we all need to prepare ourselves for the new normal needing to be a flexible model.

For the remainder of this summer term therefore and in accordance with Government instructions, pupils in Years 7-9 will continue to access teaching and learning remotely and will be given differentiated summer reading assignments before the end of term to prepare them for the next academic year.

**Finally...** I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure parents and carers that despite the restrictions in place, as a profession, we have a good record of "levelling up" children!

Rest assured that our recovery curriculum, in whatever form it eventually takes, will get pupils back up to speed, whatever their starting point when they return to school.

While we can't just pick up exactly where we left off and while it is important that we acknowledge the big event everyone will have experienced in terms of the lockdown – and for some, the significant loss associated with it – we want to try to ensure in the first instance, that the return to school feels happy for pupils.

To that end, rest assured that enhanced pastoral support will figure heavily in any curriculum recovery model deployed at Our Lady and St. Bede Catholic Academy in the future.

I hope that through these regular updates, parents and carers feel part of the “recovery conversations” that we all need to keep having with each other in such unprecedented times and I thank you for your continued patience and support over the past few months.

As always, I start these messages thinking ‘keep it short and pithy’. As always, I get to the end thinking ‘that didn’t happen’.

Nevertheless, I hope it all makes some kind of sense and I look forward to the day when we can revert back to good old face to face conversations!

Until that time...

Best wishes



Mo Wilkinson  
(Headteacher)