

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-0501WSL

Tuesday 5th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I seem to spend more time writing to you at the moment than I do anything else! Clearly, after the announcement made by the Prime Minister last night, events have overtaken most of the information I relayed to you yesterday. I will try to set out below what has changed and how we will be supporting our children over the next few weeks.

Students in School

It frustrates me when the media come out with headlines such as 'all schools closed until February half-term'. Every school in the country still has to be open to meet the legal requirement to teach vulnerable students and children of critical workers. Some schools, such as Special Schools where every student is vulnerable, will be open fully as normal. We have nearly 100 students on site today and this will continue indefinitely, probably including any school holiday periods as we did last year during lockdown. We have to tread a fine line between accepting more and more students and keeping everyone in our community safe. At this moment, we can't accommodate any more students in school and any further requests will be turned down so that we can safeguard staff and students and follow the guidance to minimise numbers in school.

For those students who are in school, from tomorrow they will receive a full timetable of lessons. Our Year 7 and Year 8 students will have a specially created timetable, which includes all of their usual lessons, but in a different order and possibly delivered by a different teacher. As they are having a full timetable in school, they will not need to complete the remote learning work set by their teachers. Year 7 and Year 8 students will have a PE lesson on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday each week, so will need to be in full uniform Monday and Friday and PE kit with a blazer on top the other days.

Our Year 9, 10 and 11 students will have a morning of English, Maths and Science lessons every day of the week, with the afternoon sessions given over to their Option subjects. These morning sessions will be exactly the same as the live lessons delivered in these subjects, so they will be expected to complete all the work set via Google Classroom in these subjects. Year 9 students have a PE lesson on a Tuesday, Year 10 on a Wednesday and Year 11 on a Thursday, so they will need to be in PE kit these days and full uniform the other four days each week.

We plan to run lunches as usual for all of these students, but will cut down break time to 15 minutes and remove tutor time from their timetables for the duration of lockdown. This means that, although the school day will still begin at 8.25am, during lockdown we will finish school at 2.15pm with buses leaving the site at 2.25pm. This will allow our staff to better cope with the childcare issues for their own children that are created by lockdown. We are yet to receive confirmation from Schools Transport as to when this change will come into effect but will let you know as soon as it has been confirmed.

Students Working From Home

We have learnt lots from the first lockdown about remote learning. We know that responses from home vary hugely from those students who simply ignore the work and do nothing, to those who finish quickly and always want more, to those who become overwhelmed and for whom remote learning causes huge amounts of anxiety. This is why we want all parents and carers to sign up to our Google Classroom alerts so that you can see what work is set and work with your child to ensure deadlines are met. Please contact us if you haven't done this yet and join the 75% of parents who are now signed up to this service.

Years 9, 10 and 11

Students who have started their GCSE courses - i.e. everyone in Year 9, 10 and 11 - will receive live lessons each day in English, Maths and Science. These will start at 8.30am, 9.30am and 10.45am each morning. The live lesson will consist of a 10-15 minute introduction to the work from a subject specialist, followed by a series of tasks and activities designed to extend and embed their learning. Their classroom teacher will be on hand via Google Classroom and email to answer any questions and support with the work for the duration of that lesson. Each activity will need to be completed that day and will be created as an assignment, so if the deadline is missed, you as parents will receive a notification to let you know work has not been completed to promptly.

Option subjects will not be delivered via live lessons but all work will be set via Google Classroom. Again, teachers will be on hand in Option subjects between 12.15pm and 2.15pm to answer any queries about the work and to provide support and feedback via email and Google Classroom.

We will be holding assemblies with Year 9 and Year 10 students Period 1 tomorrow to explain our expectations and to go through these plans in more detail. The live lessons will then begin Period 2 tomorrow. Here are the links to join the assemblies (please note, these links can only be accessed via the students' Baysgarth email addresses):

8.30am: Year 10 (surnames A-L) - meet.google.com/xwz-isdg-wrr

8.45am: Year 10 (surnames M-Z) - meet.google.com/org-qdtp-jxk

9.00am: Year 9 (surnames A-L) - meet.google.com/epw-acwi-rdu

9.15am: Year 9 (surnames M-Z) - meet.google.com/eek-dnwo-tsc

Years 7 and 8

All work will be set via Google Classroom. These will not be live lessons at this time, but will follow the same format as during the first lockdown, with assignments set and deadlines to complete. Students in Year 7 and Year 8 also have their Flipped Learning activities to complete and need to refer to their Flipped Learning Classroom to remind themselves of these learning activities.

Remote Learning will be set for most subjects, but not at this stage for ICE, Music, Drama, Dance and PE. We expect students in these year groups to be spending approximately three hours per day completing their learning activities. As for the other year groups, staff will provide support via email and Google Classroom.

Year 11 Exams

You will have heard the Prime Minister announce last night that the usual exam season will not take place in the summer and we know from the students who have got in touch this morning that this has caused much uncertainty.

First of all, the exams taking place this week and next week for our Year 10 and Year 11 students are still going ahead and the planned revision sessions will still be taking place. Students need to be revising hard for these exams and they will need your support with this.

Secondly, the advice we are giving to our Year 11 students is business as usual. We expect there may still be summer exams in some subjects, particularly Maths and English. We expect that there will be a series of Controlled Assessments set by the exam boards in most subjects, which students complete in exam conditions between March and June. We expect that teachers will also have a role to play in ranking students in their GCSE subjects and giving their best estimate as to a predicted grade. For all of these reasons we need our students to continue to be focused and work hard, doing everything possible to impress their teachers and demonstrate the potential they have in every subject.

We have a brilliant Year 11 cohort and we are very proud of their attitude and effort which has been fantastic ever since the first lockdown in March. They are confident and talented and we believe in them - we won't let them down, provided they keep up the hard work in every subject.

Other Information

Free School Meals

As mentioned yesterday, we will be creating weekly food hampers for those children eligible for a Free School Meal. This worked successfully during the first lockdown. If you would like to request food parcels, please complete a brief [online form here](#) as soon as possible.

Access to Remote Learning

With most students not in school for at least the next six weeks, it is more important than ever that they can access the work set from home. We do have laptops to lend out so please get in touch if you are having any issues - we don't want there to be any barriers to our students being able to complete work from home.

Testing

When students do return to school, they will all need to be tested twice for Covid-19 using lateral flow devices. To test everyone in the school will be a full time job for two weeks and we are looking for members of the community who might be able to volunteer their services for a couple of weeks to support getting everyone tested. If you can spare the time we'd love to hear from you.

Year 8 Options

The plan I outlined in yesterday's letter about Options has now had to be ripped up! The Options process will take place once students have returned to school. Students will not miss out and they should not be worried or anxious about choosing their Options - they will receive plenty of support, information and guidance when we return. We will be sending out a short survey to gauge indicative Option choices next week, but this is just to give us an early idea so that we can roughly plan staffing for September. Nobody will be held to these choices and this survey will not form part of the Options process, it is purely to help us plan recruitment so we can secure the best possible teachers for September.

Recruitment

We are currently advertising three posts for Baysgarth. As well as the Teaching Assistant role that I mentioned yesterday, we have also posted adverts today for two teachers. Firstly, we need a PE Teacher from Easter to cover Miss Frobisher whilst she is on maternity leave. Secondly, we need a permanent Maths Teacher from September to support us as the school continues to grow in size. Please see [our website for more details](#) and share with anyone who may be interested.

Take care and once again, thank you for your continued support!

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs
Head Teacher