10 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well. I am writing to confirm our plans for the coming weeks and also the wider agreement amongst secondary headteachers in Wirral as to what happens next for secondary schools, given that the government has asked that we begin to see Year 10 and Year 12 students face-to-face. So this letter is with particular regard to Year 10 at the moment, but also with preparation for September 2020 in mind.

On Tuesday 9 June 2020 Wirral’s secondary headteachers met as a group with Public Heath Wirral and were reassured to hear from them that there are no public health reasons why we should not move forward with our plans for wider educational participation from the 15th June. Public Health Wirral are reassured by the detailed risk assessments that all the schools and the Sixth Form College have in place and are confident that these ensure that we are offering safe environments for students and staff.

All secondary schools and the Sixth Form College have been working together through this difficult time and will continue to do so as we move forward. There is a recognition that what we do over the coming weeks will vary as we adapt our plans to open to a wider body of students, dependent on our individual circumstances.

This common, but necessarily varied, approach is fully supported by the Wirral local authority.

As such we will hold one-to-one meetings for Year 10 during the week of 15 June 2020 and then move to the planned schedule of lessons in school, as previously shared with parents of Year 10 students, from 22 June 2020.

Our minds are also turning to September 2020 and the very different start to the norm we face at the start of the next academic year. I will in the next week send out a short survey via Survey Monkey. This survey will ask for some very basic details around the provision of online lessons. We are working to build a platform via Microsoft Teams that will allow for us to teach a timetable directly to classes remotely if necessary. I have focused on Microsoft Teams as this is an easily downloadable app and desktop application that can be used on smart phones, tablets, desktop computers and laptops. We will be able to teach a lesson interactively, from home or school following the school timetable, but also record lessons so that students can then access the lesson at a time suitable for you as a family. I am acutely aware that there will be a significant demand on devices in homes at this point in time as we are all trying to develop new ways of working. I live with my three boys and we are very fortunate, but we do not have four laptops/computers and we have to share. This means that not everyone will be able to follow a live timetable and I am hoping that by recording the live lessons, students can follow the lesson perhaps in the evening. Although this means that they will not be able to personally interact with that lesson, they will be able to see everyone else’s questions and responses.

I am hoping that we will begin a trial run for Year 10 before the end of this term. I have to say that this is quite a leap of faith for my staff; they are openly sharing themselves and potentially their homes. I want to absolutely clear from the outset, if any student abuses this system once it is operating, they will not be allowed to access the online learning. These lessons and images stay within the confines of the school community and they are not to be more widely shared.

The survey will be simply to see how many students will be able to access Microsoft Teams, any issues we might be able to help with and gauge the likely level of use going forward.

I would like to thank you for your forbearance at this time. Clearly we are all in the dark as to what will happen between now and September, but we are determined to ensure that we are teaching lessons in some format. It seems clear that there will be an impact from the Coronavirus for some considerable time, but we need to find a way to make sure that teaching and learning goes on. Please bear with us as we establish online teaching, it is very new to all of us.

Yours sincerely

G:\Principal\KF Signature\Mr Kevin Flanagan signature.tif

Mr K Flanagan

Headteacher