

Highworth Warneford School

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Dear Parents/Carers of Year 10 Students

I hope that you and your family remain well and have enjoyed your time together during the recent break.

Last week, the government announced that their five tests required to further ease the lockdown have been met. Consequently, they have asked secondary schools to prepare to open for some “face-to-face contact” for students in Year 10 from Monday 15th June. Schools are now required to risk assess to see if they are able to open in accordance with government guidance. This is a detailed process which began before the holiday and will be completed during the coming week. The school’s governing board are meeting on Wednesday 3rd June to discuss whether they support a limited reopening based on the actions suggested in the risk assessment.

As you will no doubt be aware, the guidance states that we will not be returning to a familiar timetable and routine. The contact is designed to support and augment ongoing home learning rather than replace it. We are only allowed to have a maximum of 25% of Year 10 on site at any given time, which roughly translates to one day per week per student, with the flexibility to offer additional support to those who are finding it most difficult to engage with home learning.

What the face-to face contact entails is left to individual schools to decide. It is therefore likely that if you have children at two different secondary schools, the offer will vary. In deciding our approach, we have considered what would be valuable provision while ensuring staff, students and their families are kept as safe as possible. We are also mindful that some staff and students will continue to shield, may have other family commitments that need to be considered, have transport issues and, of course, that national or local guidance may change and further school closures could be required.

Year 10 Academic Mentoring Week w/b Monday 15th June

Although many Year 10 students have embraced home learning since the school closure, we feel there would be significant benefit in reviewing the progress they have made during lockdown, through 1:1 sessions with teachers during an Academic Mentoring week.

Students, preferably with one parent, would attend for around 40 minutes during a designated slot, to have a series of ten-minute appointments with an English, maths and science teacher to discuss progress and prepare for continued home learning in these key subjects. There will also be a pastoral appointment to discuss more general progress and wellbeing.

You will be sent a link to an online booking system later this week to allow you to choose a convenient slot. We are hoping that as many students and parents as possible will be able to attend this important session – social distancing and hygiene guidance will be adhered to throughout.

It is worth noting that students who have struggled to focus on home learning are not going to be “told off” so shouldn’t feel reluctant to attend. We can’t go back and change the past but we can support future learning.

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Ongoing In-School Support w/b Monday 22nd June

The academic mentoring sessions will be followed by regular days in school up to the summer break. For most students this will be for one day a week, with the option of an extra day for those who we feel need more guidance, based on how they have coped with working at home so far.

The fine details of this are yet to be decided but students are likely to be put into groups of around 10 and stay with that class for all of their sessions. Full social distancing in classrooms and around the site, along with enhanced hygiene, will ensure that any risks are minimised. A late start and early finish will ensure no mixing with the children of key workers who have been attending school throughout lockdown.

A full set of guidance will follow, once we know the numbers of students we are going to be dealing with – please see the survey request below.

It is worth noting that although we believe attendance at these sessions will be of great benefit, there will be no action taken against anyone who chooses not to send their child into school.

Transport

Please be advised that no school buses will be available during this time and government guidance is to not use public transport unless absolutely necessary. We did enquire about transport but the cost was prohibitive due to the very low numbers allowed on even the largest of coaches. Therefore, please bear in mind that your child will need transport to and from the site on their allocated day(s), unless of course they are able to safely walk or cycle to school. We are happy to *try* to be flexible in the day your child needs to attend if that makes it easier for you.

Survey

In order to aid our planning for your child's return, I would appreciate it if you could complete a very short survey by Friday 5th June. To make the process as smooth as possible and stop us having to contact individuals, it would be really helpful for everyone to complete this.

Please click on this [link](#) to take part.

The lockdown has gone on much longer than any of us ever anticipated and there are few signs that we will be back to normal, even by September. I know this is causing lots of anxiety for Year 10 students in particular, given the fact that they are studying towards exams. I would hope that being able to see them before the summer holiday will give some reassurance but I would also point out that every young person of their age is in exactly the same position and there will have to be a national conversation about how best to respond to ensure that exam grades are awarded fairly next summer. I promise they will not be disadvantaged by what is happening – hard work and commitment will still be rewarded.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,



Andy Steele
Headteacher