



18 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that this week's update finds you and your families safe and well. As the Government has provided their vision for a route through the next few months, I fully understand the fact that you may well feel there are more uncertainties now than at any other point along this journey. Whilst there is further guidance for secondary schools still to be published, I would like to clarify our current position in relation to the reopening of schools.

Following the Government's publication of its 'roadmap' to move out of lockdown, there has been much discussion in the media around what this means for the reopening of schools. The Government has requested that secondary schools are prepared from the 1st June to "offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of Year 10 and Year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year". What is important to note is that the Government have clearly stated that they will only proceed with step two of their 'roadmap', which includes the reopening of schools, should the scientific data indicate it is safe to do so. Therefore, though there has been much discussion about schools reopening on the 1st June, we must await confirmation from the Government that schools can reopen from this date. There is no reference in any documentation at this point regards Year 7, 8 and 9 students, and therefore we will continue with existing arrangements for home learning for these students after half term.

I fully understand the anxieties that continue to exist around the reopening of schools and I have always maintained that the health and safety of students, staff and parents remains the highest priority alongside the education of our students. This continues to be the case and our response to the Government announcements remains calm, controlled and measured to make sure we achieve this aim. Equally, it is vitally important to acknowledge that at some point, when the time is right, schools will reopen and we must have plans in place to allow this to happen. We have therefore been following all Government guidance extremely carefully and completing thorough risk assessments so that we can look at how we offer some 'face-to-face' contact for year 10 and year 12 students when it is safe to do so.

Please can I reassure you that should the Government say it is safe for schools to reopen on Monday 1st June, this will not mean that Stafford Manor High School will suddenly reopen its doors with the expectation all students in the priority groups must attend a full timetable of lessons every day. We will be working closely with families, and in the first instance, it is likely there will be a gradual approach that will offer some provision at specific times for those wishing to access it. This will be in a highly controlled environment that will do everything that is

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feasibly possible to ensure the safety of all those involved. We will be sharing more detailed information with families of Year 10 and 12 students when we have the 'green light' from the Government confirming that the scientific data indicates it is safe for schools to consider reopening.

Therefore, existing arrangements for home learning for Year 10 and 12 students will continue after half term. This will then be supplemented at some point by the offer of some 'face-to-face' support when we feel it is appropriate and safe to do so. We believe it is important that you are clear on the purpose of school sessions offered, and all the measures in place to ensure everyone's safety, so that you can make a fully informed decision about whether you wish your child to access the provision on offer. It is important to remember that it has been made clear in Government documentation that student non-attendance during this term will not incur fines or penalties. You know your children and your own personal circumstances best, and during this phase of the reopening process, you will be able to make the decision that you believe is right for your child.

Should you wish to read the Government advice for parents on schools reopening, the following link may help:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Please can I reassure the families of those students who are currently coming into school that our existing provision will be unaffected by these announcements.

Schools have been trusted to make arrangements with their school community over the half term holiday for the children of critical workers so that the essential services required to tackle COVID-19 stay functioning. Keeping school open over the holiday period requires a range of staff to be available, including site supervisors, cleaners and first aiders to name a few. I am really proud to say that, due to the fantastic staff at Stafford Manor High School, we will be able to play our part in supporting NHS and care sector workers along with the frontline emergency services, by offering supervision on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the holiday. We will be consulting with the parents and carers of vulnerable children, and those who are critical workers who are currently accessing provision, to establish their requirements for half term.

I continue to receive lots of inspiring messages from students which have included creative poems about lockdown, a letter of thanks sent by the local MP to children who are helping the community, students who have organised VE day celebrations, and pictures of simply brilliant cakes (I just wish I could eat a piece of each one!). These actions, particularly at times like these, can make a massive difference and show how great our students are. We are continuing to award achievement points, and reward certificates will be distributed very soon. I also do appreciate it when you email me, and let other staff know, what your child has been doing at home to help others and show a little kindness.

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Throughout this period of school closures, we really do value all the work you are doing at home to support your child. You have really been performing lots of 'mini miracles' that will make such a difference when your child is allowed to return to school. Please keep going and maintain routines, help with work wherever possible, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and continue to give positive encouragement whenever it is due. Through this week we will be asking children to complete a brief 'home learning survey' through Show My Homework. Please encourage your child to complete this as it will provide us with valuable feedback on their experiences to date. This will allow us to refine our systems after half term to improve things even further for you and your children.

The Covid-19 section of our website is worth viewing as there are plenty of links to websites and agencies that can help support families through these difficult times. There is information on internet safety for children and parents, careers guidance, local support groups, and where you can get help to support the mental well-being of your family. It is updated weekly and I would encourage you to have a look <https://www.staffordmanorhighschool.com/covid-19-updates>.

We probably always knew that moving out of lockdown, or "coming down the mountain" as the Prime Minister described, would be far more complicated than the initial shut down. When I reflect back over the last 8 weeks, given the circumstances we have faced, we have all achieved so much. Be proud of yourself and your children and how far you have come. As we move into the next phase of a journey that none of us has ever experienced before, these achievements fill me with confidence that we will overcome the challenges that now lie ahead. We must all maintain a calm and measured approach, work closely together, support each other, and remain positive for the future. By collectively doing these things, what may currently seem like daunting hills for us to climb on our own, will become much easier as we navigate them together. As the possibility of school reopening for some students now moves a step closer, we continue to be here for you at Stafford Manor High School and don't hesitate to contact us if needed. Stay calm, stay positive, and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



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