

Headteacher's Update: 16th June 2020

Dear parents and carers

The last couple of days have been some of the most positive for a long time. We have welcomed back more students in Years 10 and 12 and been able to see them taking part in proper lessons for the first time in what feels like a long while. I have to say that, whilst many of them looked somewhat shell-shocked for the first hour or two (the consequence, no doubt, of having to get up early for some of them!) they seemed to get the hang of things very quickly. Their teachers have certainly been full of praise for them and we have loved having them back in school.

As regards social distancing, the students have been very mature and, from a school point of view, we feel as if our planning has paid dividends and we have been able to manage things properly. Our fingers are now crossed that the national situation changes such that we can see more students in school sooner rather than later.

Survey and online lessons

Meanwhile, we shall continue trying to develop our online provision – recognising, of course, that this can never be as effective as real, face-to-face lessons. There are a few questions on this in the [parent survey](#) and we'd really appreciate it if you could spend a few minutes giving us some feedback.

Laptops

Many thanks to all of you who completed the survey on computer/laptop access. We had over 1200 responses, which was fantastic and will really help us when considering anything related to home learning going forwards. One thing that was very clear from the responses was that we will not be able to move to a model of students using laptops in lessons for the time being. Whilst many of you (over 400) are buying Chromebooks and many others have said they would be happy for children to bring devices into school, there are far too many who would prefer not to. We absolutely respect this, and fully understand the reasons for it. Using laptops in all lessons has never been something we are desperate to do anyway, but I'm sure you'll understand why we were willing to consider it in the context of wanting to ensure students have them anyway for home learning during lockdown.

What is most important is that, once the Chromebooks all arrive, we will be in a position where nearly all students do have access to a suitable device at home; this will be invaluable if online lessons need to continue next year, but also for homework and revision once we are all back in school. Finally, on this, I'd like to thank you for all the positive comments about the Chromebook scheme; it has been quite a task to get set up so quickly and we are delighted that so many of you have been able to take advantage of it. Please also note that we will be offering a similar deal for those in Year 6 who will be joining us in September and that there will be another opportunity for children in other year groups to order one before the new academic year.

Key workers and vulnerable children

We remain open on a full-time basis for vulnerable children and those of critical workers. Please see the relevant section on our [school closure portal](#) but bear in mind that we will need plenty of notice if you want to use this facility for the first time; with more students now in school and a full programme of online lessons, it takes time to re-organise staffing.

I will be in touch again soon. In the meantime, please take care.

Kind regards

Gwyn Williams