

12th June 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Much of this week has been spent finalising and actioning plans to ensure the safe return of larger numbers of students and staff to the school from Monday onward. For us, this marks the start of the recovery phase whereby we map out and implement how we will ensure that our students and wider school community are supported and not adversely affected by the prolonged school closure. I would again like to thank all parents and carers of students in Years 10 and 12 for their support during the planning process and would invite parents and carers of students in Years 7 to 9 to review the plans as this may give added confidence when the time comes to make the decision about whether to send their child back to school. The relevant documents can be found in the [‘latest news’](#) section of the school website. I am very much looking forward to welcoming students in Year 12 into school on Monday with students in Year 10 attending on a limited basis from the 22nd June.

I am sure that many of you will have been following the media this week and particularly the discussions related to schools reopening in September. One thing that I think we have all learnt in this pandemic is that it is extremely hard to predict the future. There is clearly a balance to be achieved with regards to restarting the country (including schools and the wider economy), whilst preventing another spike in infections. Regardless of whether or not 2 metres is maintained for social distancing it seems as though a return to full time education in September is unlikely and that the ‘blended learning’ approach will be extended further, with students spending some time in school and some time online. I would also like to reassure families of students who will be sitting exams next year that a DfE consultation is due on this shortly as it has been recognised that many children will not have been able to adequately cover the full extent of their specifications before May 2021. I won’t attempt to second guess the outcome of this consultation; however, I very much doubt that we will revert entirely to the previous system that required, in many cases, 100% examination of content.

Black Lives Matter Campaign

The tragic death of George Floyd in the United States appears to have evoked a once in a generation response to the issue of equality and racial justice, which has seen the mobilisation of thousands of people to protest on the streets in several countries across the globe. Having taken time to reflect, what has pleased me most is that it has brought together people from different communities who all share a similar goal to see much greater equality between people of different races, cultures and ethnicities.

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Mr Gary Mullings BA (Hons)
Headteacher

I do think that it is important that we recognise how far we have come as a nation to this point. There are many things that were deemed acceptable when I was a child that are clearly no longer tolerated; the nature and content of some television programmes is just one example. During my youth the release of Nelson Mandela and the subsequent end of Apartheid in South Africa as well as the murder of Stephen Lawrence and subsequent MacPherson Inquiry both led to a significant shift in terms of how we think about race and community in the UK. However, I do believe that we owe it to our children to continue to strive to ensure that they get a better deal with regard to all equality issues than we did as their teachers and parents. It is important that as a school community we take time to reflect, listen and learn and ensure that the wider student body has a significant role in the development of our equality planning as we move into a recovery phase. The fact that the student body voted for Rosa Parks as the figurehead for one of our new Houses demonstrates the level of insight and understanding that our young people possess and I very much look forward to listening to their views regarding the development and promotion of equality issues as we go forward. My thanks this week go to Mrs Coyle, Mrs Bashford-Hynes and Mr Beale for their excellent work in putting together assemblies and other resources related to this issue.

Student Leadership

This week we will be resuming 'The Apprentice' challenges that form part of the process to find the next Head Students for the coming academic year. The twenty three applicants have two tasks to complete in the coming week including the production of a video related to their experiences of lockdown. The students have been allocated to one of four groups, with each group required to elect a team leader. Good luck to all involved. It is an absolute pleasure to lead a school that has so many high quality student leaders and so many students eager to take on these key roles within the organisation.

In the coming weeks, we are planning to meet remotely with groups of student leaders and run a remote process for Year 11 prefects (current Year 10 students). I will update parents and students about these activities shortly.

Have a good weekend.

Kind regards,



Gary Mullings
Headteacher