



22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The past six weeks or so seem to have passed in no time at all even though we have been locked down and anxious at the situation around us. I have been heartened by messages from you and by some of the excellent work that has been completed by our students whilst being at home. Thank you for supporting your child and encouraging them to complete academic work but also for offering other non-academic experiences that have taken advantage of particular skills within the home. Artwork, baking, drawing, gardening, carpentry and home decorating have all been activities some of our students have been involved in. Well done to you all!

As you will be aware the government have set out an ambition that schools are to re-open from 1st June. Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority, have been consulting closely with schools and other partners about the best and safest way to re-open schools, at the earliest possible date.

As a result of these discussions the Local Authority is strongly advising schools not to widen their re-opening until, at the earliest, 8th June and that will, of course, be subject to any further developments in national advice and guidance. The Whitby High School will, however, continue to follow national guidance in offering places to children of key workers and vulnerable children. Thank you for your responses to our recent survey, as a result of which we will be expanding our provision to accommodate increased numbers. This was expected as Key Workers such as school staff will return to schools and not continue working from home

Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority would also ask you to understand that not all schools will be able to re-open at the same time or for the same eligible year groups. This will be for a variety of reasons, such as staff availability (due to Covid-19) and the possible challenges around school buildings that may make social distancing more difficult to achieve when following the national advice and guidance. You will also be aware that teacher unions and other staff bodies have expressed serious concerns about widening attendance and have made their own demands to ensure staff safety – so there are still many things to consider

Over the past week or so we have been putting tentative plans for increased “face to face” engagement with our Y10 and Y12 students. This has included the most effective way of



reducing risk and ensuring that social distancing measures are in place. There are still no plans to bring Years 7-9 back into school before the summer break.

The Department for Education have also published advice for parents and carers which can be found via the link:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=1992819e-b988-439e-9846-d5d2ae5f5e22&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuknotifications&utm_content=mediate

Please be assured that I will keep you informed as to our decision about re-opening and when this will take place, and for which children. Before releasing any information regarding this I plan to wait until we have more information, not least following the update planned by the government for the end of the month. Unfortunately, to date the Headteachers and Principals of schools have not had prior detail of any statements made by government relating to such matters.

All schools have been undertaking rigorous risk assessments and the Local Authority have confirmed that they support schools with the decisions they make.

In the meantime, I would like to thank you for your patience, understanding and hard work during these very difficult times.

Farewell to our Education Welfare Officer, Mrs Elaine Clarke

As this half term draws to a close I would like to inform parents that our well respected Education Welfare Officer, Mrs Elaine Clarke is leaving us today following a long history working with our school and supporting students, parents and carers. I will miss Mrs Clarke however I thank her for her loyal service to the school and wish her all the very best for the future.

Year 12 and 13 Key Workers

With many of our Year 12 and 13 students under taking key worker roles in the community, we just wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to each and every one of you for helping to keep the country going during this pandemic and for helping the more vulnerable members of our community. Just another reason that our Sixth Form have made us hugely proud during this difficult time. Massive well done from us all.

Year 7 Residential Trip to Menai

As discussed in a previous update, we have reluctantly cancelled our Y7 residential visit to the Conway Centre at Menai later this term. Refunds to parents and carers are now being processed by the finance staff however we have had a large number of repayments to make as all education visits and trips have been cancelled. I ask for your continued patience as we move forward with this.

Contact with School

It is important that through these difficult times we keep communication between students and school open. I would like to stress again that if students are struggling or have any concerns generally or about their work, they should be keeping in touch with their Form Tutors, HPMs and teachers through emails or contacting school generally.

As parents and carers, we would also like to ask you to keep informing us of anything that you think is important particularly with regards to your child's wellbeing. We need to have an overview about such things as **bereavements, whether Covid-19 related or not** plus things that may have happened over the Lockdown that you believe we should be aware of. Please continue to inform House Progress Managers so that appropriate support can be put in place on their return to school.

Please can I remind you that when emailing school about specific information relating to your child, **we will not respond to emails sent from a company or business email address**. We will only respond to specific child related queries that come to us from a personal email address related to that child. I am sure that you will appreciate that by responding to an employer based email address this could breach GDPR regulations and safeguarding best practice – potentially putting your child at risk.

Careers

If your child would like to arrange an email or telephone conversation with our career advisor Paula Owens, please email aconnor@whitbyhs.cheshire.sch.uk who will pass the details to Paula who will contact you directly.

Virtual Careers Festival

Hopefully those who have visited the Festival have found it useful the event continues until Friday.

The employers involved had given links to their websites, on some of these there are vacancies which may appeal to students

For example:-

Balfour Beattie are advertising 2 Degree Apprenticeships in the North West a Quantity Surveyor (job 16053 on their site) and An Environmental Degree Apprenticeship (job 15854) both have closing dates of 29th May. Details on the website and applications are online.

The Balfour Beattie website also has vacancies across the country for people with experience. Examples include Stores, Site Managers and Supervisors, HGV drivers and HVAC engineers. These may be of interest to family or friends who have lost or may be at risk of losing their jobs in the current situation.

National Rail have vacancies across the country. Those nearest to us are a Section Administrator (IRC2183414) admin, record keeping and IT tasks (Liverpool) closing date 25th May

IT Service Analyst (IRC2177971) based in Manchester. Closing date 28th May. Network rail offer help with travel costs

College update

For those students who have applied to Cheshire College South and West. Miss Connor have been told that the college will be contacting those who have applied in the next few days. I asked that this information go out as soon as practical to help students understand what is happening. College will also be sending out recommended tasks for students to carry out before starting with them. The idea is to help students prepare and be familiar with some of the work.

Mental Health Support

Please see the following links and attachments for schools during the lockdown period. The Mental Health Crisis telephone line is provided by CWP and is accessible 24/7.

The myHappyMind Light Programme is a free resource for all primary schools and is also available for Early Years settings. The attached impact report and school leaflet are from myHappyMind, which is the emotional health and wellbeing platform currently being piloted in 24 Primary Schools in West Cheshire.

Schools registration link: <https://myhappymind.org/light-enquiry>

Coronavirus testing eligibility and how test and testing kits work

Guidance on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test, how to get tested and the different types of test available can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has published guidance for members of the public and patients about coronavirus tests and testing kits, including information on the different types of tests available and how they work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-tests-and-testing-kits-for-coronavirus-covid-19-work>

Department for Education coronavirus helpline – Monday 25 May Bank Holiday

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Phone: 0800 046 8687

The helpline will remain open over the May Bank Holiday weekend for staff, parents and young people as follows:

10am to 4pm – Saturday, Sunday and Monday

Our standard opening hours will resume on Tuesday 26 May:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 4pm – Saturday and Sunday

Key Worker Childcare Provision

As we now plan for 1 June and beyond, I emailed you earlier this week with an e-survey to assist us to update our childcare provision as more parents and carers return to work and the demand will potentially increase. Thank you to those of you who have already responded, and please can I urge those that have not to do so by the deadline today if you require childcare. This will enable us to guarantee full coverage on Monday in a way that ensures safeguarding concerns are met. To access the survey please follow the link below:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Hb5f2cACE0uq30qVQfew_QeuAonyjxFPlqURLwDENKNUN0pHN1RFQVdOVU9BSDU1VkoyRU9RNjJRMi4u

Critical Workers

Children of critical workers are encouraged to attend school, and to reflect plans for wider opening of schools from 1 June, at the earliest. Updated information defining vulnerable children, in line with existing guidance, for the purpose of continued education.

[Critical workers who can access schools or educational settings](#)

Handwashing advice

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.

The latest guidance and video on hand washing can be found at:

- ✓ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

The e-Bug project is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene.

Resources are currently available for KS1, KS2 and KS3 and can be used in various settings including schools and at home:

- ✓ <https://e-bug.eu/>
- ✓ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures>

I hope that you have a good half term break and thank you for your continued support.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Heeley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr B Heeley
Headteacher