



22 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you safe and well.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our Year 6 parents and carers as this is the first time you have been part of the whole school communication. I thought it was important you were kept in the loop about what is happening in school during the current situation and our plans as we move forward towards September.

I am writing to update you on a number of school issues. Please be aware that some of these are not related to school closure.

Year 10s and 12s in school

It has been wonderful to have the Year 10 and 12 students back in school this week. It has also been very strange, and not the human experience we would have liked, but it is the first step on the road back to normality and we've been thrilled to have the students here learning. I have been so impressed, but not surprised at all, with their focus and enthusiasm. They have also all been exceptional in understanding the guidelines around social distancing, hygiene and the intricacies of the new arrangements in school. I look forward to seeing more students throughout the rest of the term.

Other year groups in school

In line with the government's announcement last week, we intend to invite some students in other year groups to attend face to face meetings in school. We would love to be able to extend this to all students. Given the guidelines around 'bubbles' and numbers of students on site, this will be limited to a small number in each year group where we feel there is an urgent need. We will make contact with families directly if we would like your child to attend a meeting.

Consultation on school day

Thank you to those parents that replied to the parent consultation on changing the school day. As I outlined in my letter, the rationale for these changes is to ensure the smooth operation of the school day. With a relatively small dining area and limited covered areas outdoors, a shorter, staggered lunch ensures a much calmer and positive social experience for all students. We also wanted the new Year 7 to have lunch by themselves as we believe this will help them transition more effectively to secondary school, get to know each other and manage the change more confidently.

I received 14 responses to the consultation. There were two main issues raised in these. Firstly, the time of the last lunch break means it will be late for those year groups to eat and secondly, the reduction of the lunch time to 30 minutes and concern that this would not be enough time for students to eat their lunch.

In response to the first main issue raised, we are very mindful of the later lunch but have considered this in the planning of our break time.



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Students have a 20 minute break from 11-11.20am where they may eat a substantial snack such as bacon sandwiches, cheesy baguettes etc. We feel this will keep them going until 1.30pm - 10 minutes later than the current late lunch - as they will have just over a 2 hour gap in between.

I fully understand the concerns raised about the shorter lunch and again, this is something we did consider when putting the proposal together. Our rationale for this is that we have observed students this year at lunchtime and because we only have 2 year groups for lunch at any one time, we have found that all students have been served and have eaten their lunch within 20 minutes, allowing enough time for students to eat comfortably and enjoy some social time without a longer wait until their next lesson.

Thank you to those of you that did take the time to respond and I do hope I have reassured you that we have considered the points you have raised. However, we will now proceed with the proposed changes as we believe that they are in the best interests of the students in terms of their lunchtime experience. We will review this again at the end of the year to assess its impact.

Feedback from Parent and Student Surveys

Thank you to all parents who took the time to complete the survey we sent on 3rd June. We have almost 300 responses, which gives us a very good field from which to understand the strengths and areas for development of our current provision, and therefore what actions we need to take. It was encouraging to read so many 'thank yous' for the hard work and dedication our teachers and support staff have been putting in to supporting your children in uncharted times.

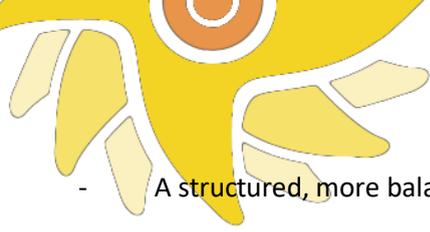
I'd like to summarise some of the key points here:

What are we doing well:

- Most parents agree that the volume of work is just right
- Most parents feel that their child is coping well with work at home
- Most parents agree that their child is able to ask for help from their teachers
- Communication with parents has been regular and information provided has been useful
- Staff are maintaining contact with students via telephone in weekly welfare calls
- The balance of work coming through has improved from the start of lockdown
- Phone calls from form tutors have been motivational
- Google Classroom is user-friendly
- Rewards in most subjects/from most teachers
- Praise and encouragement via Google Classroom
- If I had a problem, I know it would be resolved
- Hard copies of work are being sent when there is no access to technology
- Students' wellbeing is good, and parents and students know where to seek support

What could we do to improve our provision:

- Some parents feel there is too much work, some too little
- More regular and consistent feedback for students across all subjects
- More personal comments and encouragement in teacher feedback



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- A structured, more balanced timetable for uploading work onto Google Classroom
- Explain the work more clearly in all subjects
- Let parents know if students are not completing work
- Clearer, more reasonable deadlines so students can manage their time
- Some work on paper even if we can access Google Classroom
- More reward points - more consistency across subjects and teachers
- Online lessons with teacher explanations
- Q&A sessions with teachers

I'd like to briefly address our immediate and longer term plans to address some of the concerns above:

- We will aim for all students, whether or not they return to school this term, to receive regular phone calls home from a member of staff, in addition to any online communication via Google Classroom
- We have provided training for teaching staff on mechanisms to provide effective feedback for students online, and faculties have been asked to identify key pieces of extended work that will receive individual feedback
- We have also provided training on improving the clarity of instructions for students, online and in hard copies
- We will be contacting parents where we have concerns about students' work online
- A consistent and fair approach to rewarding students is being agreed and established across all faculties

We are also consulting with staff on the feasibility of:

- Extending recorded and live lessons online beyond the current Year 12 provision
- Creating a weekly timetable to allocate different subjects to different days
- Additional paper work packs for all students

Below you will find details of some of the resources that are available immediately to provide the information that many parents have requested.

Curriculum Resources

Our website has up to date information on the content of students' learning for the rest of the term. As communicated in our last letter, we have asked Subject Leaders to identify the essential skills and knowledge students need in order to support them progressing to the next year or key stage.

The Essential Curriculum lists, along with resources for students and parents, can be found here:

<https://www.glossopdale.derbyshire.sch.uk/Essential-Curriculum-Summer-2020/>

All of this information has also been made available on Google Classroom for students.



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Personal Development

Our curriculum, both in school and at home, aims to develop both students' academic and social, moral and cultural understanding. Citizenship, careers information, positive relationships and Modern British Values are equally important and we hope that students will spend time developing their knowledge in these areas in addition to their subject lessons.

We have a comprehensive Personal Development programme where weekly assemblies are uploaded onto Google Classroom, in addition to two tutor time presentations.

Time permitting, they are also an excellent resource to discuss with your children at home.

Here is the link to the webpage which also includes some of the recent assemblies:

<https://www.glossopdale.derbyshire.sch.uk/-Curriculum/Assembly-and-Tutorial-Overview/>

Parent and Student Forums

The feedback from the surveys was really helpful. However, it does not replace the power of face to face discussion with parents and students. As we plan for September, with the likelihood of a change to the induction process for the start of the school year, we'd like to consult in more detail with both parents and students. We will aim to do this virtually, If you would or you child would be interested in taking part in either a parent or student forum can you please email info@glossopdale.school with the title 'parent forum' if you are interested or 'student forum' if it relates to your child. We will then be in touch to set up our first meeting.

Best wishes

Debbie McGloin
Executive Headteacher