



Monday 1 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that the half term break was refreshing in every respect and that the resumption of home learning, including our A Level bridging courses, is going well this morning. With things being so busy in every household right now, I am sorry that I have to send such a lengthy letter to you today. There is a great deal to share with you in order to keep you informed at this time in our lives.

There seemed to be quite a lot going on in the news in the past week. At times, it was easy to miss the evidence that this disease is coming under control. This will mean that our lives will continue on its path to normality - albeit forever changed in many ways that are both obvious and less so.

#### **Department for Education Updates for Years 10 and 12**

As far as schools are concerned, there were further updates from the Government in the last week, including [an important document](#) that was released by the Department for Education on Bank Holiday Monday. It contained a welcome clarification on how secondary schools will be permitted to begin reopening in Term 6 for Years 10 and 12 students (only), with each school being required to set out a reopening plan that is based on a thorough risk assessment. The document prohibits more than 25% of any year group being in school each day and this presents a further challenge for us as we set out a reopening plan. *More on that later in this letter.*

#### **Information about Term 6 for Key Stage 3 and Year 11**

Meanwhile, it is now certain that students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 will not be returning to school until the next academic year. This means that home learning will continue across the country for students in these year groups and we therefore call upon young people in each of these year groups to muster one last herculean effort this half term to stay on top of their learning. Then return to us with a level of independent study skills and personal motivation that has the potential to transform their eventual GCSE and A Level outcomes.

Our hope and current expectation is that all students will return to CNS in September. However, it is plain for us all to see that this will hinge on the local and national infection rates and therefore we must avoid making too many assumptions about what September opening in all schools across the country will look like.

Whilst the majority of KS3 and Year 11 will remain at home throughout Term 6, this does not include those students who are vulnerable or are the children of key workers. The numbers of students in both categories who will begin attending our Learning Hub are expected to grow over the next seven weeks. If, for instance, you are a key worker now returning to work then your children are, of course, fully entitled to join the Hub simply by getting in touch with the relevant Head of Year.

*Continued...*

### *Initial Reopening Planning for Year 10 and Year 12 students*

In recent weeks, I have been struck by the eagerness of my colleagues to be incredibly flexible in their support for a reopening plan. The detail of any final plan will of course depend on the numbers of students in Year 10 and Year 12 who are willing and able to return to school. This is why we shall today launch a targeted survey with Year 10 and Year 12 families to collect more precise information about the intentions of each family at this moment in time. In order to assist those families we have set out a draft plan of how the reopening is likely to look, below:

Week	Year 10s	Year 12s
w/b 15 June	Complete the establishment of clearly organised and marked socially distant classrooms, learning spaces, public spaces and corridors. In addition, deliver the first tranche of induction and health and safety training for staff.	
w/b 22 June	One-to-one mentoring conversations with key students (and their parents / carers) in Years 10 and 12, held in socially distant and confidential spaces. This would be our opportunity to meet with each child on our SEN register, those who are disadvantaged and those who have struggled to engage with home learning or cope with lockdown. In short, those students for whom home learning and the lockdown presents the greatest long-term educational risk.	
w/b 29 June	<p>We propose to invite each student (along with no more than 24 others) to attend for one full day each. Great care will be in place to ensure social distancing and they would all be taught in the very large Main Hall.</p> <p>Their lessons would focus on the core subjects (English, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics).</p> <p>Meanwhile, the volume of home learning in these core subjects would fall accordingly.</p>	<p>Plans for Year 12 are made more complicated by the restriction to 25% of a sixth form being permitted in school at one time.</p> <p>Furthermore, families will be aware that there are no core subjects and instead all three of their chosen subjects are options.</p> <p>As we await further clarification from the Department for Education, we aspire to set out a plan that enables each student to have access to face-to-face teaching in each of their subjects each week.</p>
w/b 6 July	<p>We then propose to move the focus on to the three options subjects; giving face-to-face time between students and their teachers.</p> <p>Students would not attend school each day (only 25% of Year 10 are permitted in school on any given day) and therefore classes would be split to ensure all students had some access to their teachers before the summer break.</p>	
w/b 13 July	<p>Meanwhile, the volume of home learning in these three option subjects would fall accordingly.</p>	

### *Survey of Year 10 and Year 12 Families*

In order to move the planning forward towards the detail of individual timetables, we now ask parents and carers with children in Year 10 and Year 12 to complete a short survey by Thursday 4 June. This survey will seek to establish the likely attendance rate amongst our students so that we can plan accordingly. The survey will not take long but will enable us to present a firm plan to those students and their families within the next week or so. Families in Year 10 and Year 12 that do not complete the survey by Thursday will be contacted on Friday morning.

### *Recent Google Survey of Parents and Carers – 382 responses received!*

You will recall that I invited parents and carers to take part in a Google Survey and we have been delighted with the response from almost 400 families. The key headlines from this survey are as follows:

- The vast majority (but not all) of families might be able to drop off and collect their children whilst limited access to **buses** remain in place.
- The vast majority of families had no concerns about providing a **packed lunch** until the dining facilities are back to normal.
- There is variable **access to technology** across families, however access to **smartphones** was almost universally accessible amongst those who took part in the survey.
- With regards to **Chromebooks**:
  - Almost three quarters expressed interest, dependent on learning more of their educational value.
  - Just over a quarter felt that they did not need a Chromebook because there was already a device available in the home.

Given the high interest in learning more about Chromebooks and their potential usage at CNS going forward, please see the separate letter from me in the next day or two.

### *Using the Survey to Launch the 'Reopening Frequently Asked Questions'*

You may recall the survey also sought questions from you as families with regards to how the school would safely manage the gradual reopening of schools. I cannot overstate the value of your responses because it has allowed us to strengthen our draft risk assessment and create a new 'Reopening Frequently Asked Questions' page on our website. As a result of your participation in that survey, almost seventy questions were generated, some anticipated but many that were not. They fell into one of several categories that include health and safety, student and staff wellbeing, teaching and learning, food / dining and transport.

In terms of timescales, I hope to secure approval of both our reopening plans and risk assessment by the Governing Body towards the end of week 2 of Term 6. Once that is approved, the 'Reopening FAQs' will go live on our website (homepage) and include web features that will provide you with as many or as few details as you require. I expect to focus on that finalised risk assessment and FAQs in my letter to you two weeks' time, on Monday 15 June.

### *Additional Questions Asked...*

Several questions did not fall into the category of reopening but are nonetheless important to raise and answer with all families as follows:

#### *Question: What will happen to Year 10 and Year 12 end of year examinations?*

These examinations are now cancelled. They will be replaced by lower stakes assessments of progress that will enable all Heads of Department to more accurately decide on (i) summer homework activities for Years 10 and 12 and (ii) determine the curriculum map for these students in September and beyond.

***Question: What will happen to the dates of the Year 11 and Year 13 mock exams in 2020/21?***

There will be Year 11 mocks in October 2020 and again in February /March 2021. Similarly, Year 13 mocks will take place in November 2020 and again in March 2021.

***Question: Are Year 10 and Year 12 students going to get special consideration in their exams next year, considering they have lost valuable lesson time?***

Given that all Year 10 and 12 students across the country have been equally disadvantaged by school closures, it is not likely that students will be able to apply for special consideration unless they can demonstrate uniquely exceptional circumstances.

***Question: Will the school be using live lessons with their students going forward?***

Live lessons place significant and often underestimated demands on teachers. There are significant safeguarding, logistical and access issues to overcome as well. Our assessment is that whilst live learning offers advantages, the related risks are too significant to consider a roll-out at CNS. Furthermore, as the school gradually reopens, teachers will be spending more time in front of students and classes and will of course be unable to also appear live for other classes at timetabled hours. Nevertheless, the pandemic has raised new and more urgent questions around the use of technology in our school. As a result, the way we access and use technology is under review at CNS and subject to plans from September onwards.

***And finally...***

That is quite enough from me today and yet more for parents and carers of Year 10 and Year 12 students in my separate letter to you very shortly. It was tempting to exclude all of the information on Year 10 and Year 12 plans in this letter to all families. However, the feedback I have received makes it very clear that families appreciate being provided with the bigger picture at all times and leaving it to them to decide how much of each letter to read and digest. I hope that the balance has been right today and suspect that in the coming weeks there will be similar bumper editions.

Please look out for the normal updates from Ms Hancock (Wednesday), Mrs Smart (Thursday) and Mr Gent (Friday). In addition to a second letter from me regarding Chromebooks. In the meantime, you can contact me directly at [head.4010@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:head.4010@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk)).

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher