

11th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update following The Prime Minister's address of Sunday 10th May 2020

We are writing to update you following the Prime Minister's address yesterday evening and regarding the potential gradual relaxation of lockdown arrangements. Many of you will have seen this and will understandably now be looking to the school for direction.

It seems likely that from 1st June some primary children (those in Reception, Year 1, and Year 6) will start to return to school. Following this, the plan is that secondary students in exam year groups may return so that some school-based teaching can take place prior to the summer holiday. At The Abbey School this possibly means the return of Year 10 and Year 12 students for a limited period before the end of July, although this is highly conditional on what happens nationally in the interim.

You will naturally have many questions about how this will affect your children. Even though we are unable to answer all questions at this time we can completely assure you that the safety and well-being of students will be the main priority for staff and governors. Senior staff are looking closely at how school systems, structures and routines might be temporarily adapted to allow more students to return. These proposals are in the early stages but will inevitably include a one-way system around the premises, promotion of social-distancing, changes to the school day and other measures to promote hygiene and cleanliness.

Detailed guidance is due from the Government in the forthcoming days. Once we have this and more clarity on how and when secondary schools will return, we will be best placed to finalise our plans and share them with you.

In the short term, our school remains open to the children of critical workers, vulnerable children and those that cannot be cared for safely at home. Government advice also continues to be *'that if it is at all possible for children to remain at home then they must be'*. This means that in nearly all cases it is currently better for children to be at home if possible.

Please can we take this opportunity to praise the quality of some of the work that is being produced by students working from home. It is right that exemplary work that is produced is praised and that our students are rewarded. To ensure this happens we are collecting in the names of students that have gone 'above-and-beyond' from our teachers. We are also keen to show examples of practical work on our social media channels.

Feedback from questionnaires shows that most parents are enjoying working with their children on school tasks although in a small number of cases there are technological challenges that need to be overcome. If you are feeling frustrated or experiencing difficulties please contact us directly on the email address at the end of this letter and we will do what we can to assist. We cannot promise to solve every issue remotely but will do our utmost to help. It is important for me that you feel supported.

Finally, we wish to turn to a topic that may not appear to be an immediate priority but may nonetheless sneak-up on some families in the coming weeks. Ordinarily at this time of year parents are starting to budget for expenditure on school uniform in readiness for September. Some of you have been worried due to being unable to set up your usual payment plans for uniform with local suppliers.

Our school uniform suppliers tell us that they are working hard to ensure that students will have the necessary kit available to return to school when such time occurs. Rivals in Faversham and Forsters in Sittingbourne can provide the branded elements of our school wear. Both providers are putting in place measures to ensure that uniform purchases can continue to be made during this difficult period and have online stores. For example, Forsters, has put in place Perspex screening, disposable measuring tapes and social distancing measures. This should give parents confidence in visiting and ordering from stores when they are permitted to reopen. The non-branded elements of school-wear can be purchased from any store that sells children's school wear, so long as they meet the clear uniform guidance. A letter will be released in the forthcoming weeks with this guidance attached.

May we thank all parents and carers for their efforts during this period and should there be any way in which the school can further support you please do not hesitate to contact us via info@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher



Mr Kevin Dickens
Head of School