

22 May 2020

Dear Families,

Since last writing to you, we have been closely monitoring the national announcements and guidance for schools and engaging with key stakeholders regarding our current priorities and challenges. In the information below, I set out what this currently means for us at The Misbourne.

Years 7, 8 and 9:

Things remain largely unchanged for these year groups as we continue with remote learning for what now looks likely to be the duration of the Summer term. Many staff are now adding audio or video files to their lesson resources to help support learning. This may mean that some of the work will now take longer than half an hour to complete but if students find themselves spending longer than the usual length of a lesson to complete the work, they should contact their teacher for support. Alongside their classwork, we will look to develop activities to support students' transition into the next year and to celebrate their many achievements from this year.

We may be in a position whereby we start to have more staff coming in to school to work face-to-face with students in Years 10 and 12. If that is the case, it will understandably impact on their availability to set and respond to work in the same way they are now, for the days that they are in school. If this does occur, you may well find some temporary adjustments to the work set, such as project work or more creative/independent tasks given to stretch across more than one lesson.

Year 10 and 12 students:

We remain committed to looking into our options for providing some face-to-face opportunities before the end of the Summer term. The Government announced they would like secondary schools to do this at the earliest from 1st June but is yet to release specific guidance for secondary settings as they have done for primaries.

We have used the primary school guidance to inform our own risk assessments and plans, but this would mean creating 'bubble' or groups of students and minimising movement around the site or rotation of groups. This effectively means that we would not be able to rotate students' time around specialist teachers.

Until further guidance is released, we will not be able to finalise plans for on-site face-to-face sessions with individual subject teachers. We will, however, continue to plan towards providing some form of face-to-face contact prior to the Summer break, which may include enhancing the support given by form tutors both from a pastoral and wellbeing perspective as well as academic support.

I would like to thank those families who completed our recent survey on returning to school. The information you provided has been extremely helpful for us to consider how best to move forward. When we can share a definitive plan for providing face-to-face sessions, we will share this detail with you, alongside all our control

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measures. With that information, we will then ask you to complete another survey, this time giving the name of your child so that we can plan with specific students and numbers in mind.

Children with EHC plans and vulnerable children:

Whilst the provision for these children to attend on-site schooling has always been available, the government is now saying that their attendance is 'expected'. Whilst it is important that decisions continue to be made on the needs of individual students, we are in support of more of these students coming in to school where we can support them with their learning and aid their gradual reintegration back into school whilst there are still low numbers on site.

Children of Keyworkers:

Our provision for these children again remains unchanged and students are very welcome to attend school, all we ask is that you book your child in using the details below, with as much advanced notice as possible so that we are able to plan staffing and a zone in which to work and take breaks in accordance with social distancing requirements.

Learning Platforms:

Some of you have been asking why we have not been using software such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom to provide live lessons. Whilst we agree that there are some benefits of 'live' learning, there are also issues to consider. Things such as how to cater for those households with weaker internet signals; or those who share devices across more than one child or adult. There is also the important issue of how to safeguard those taking part, staff and students alike. Additionally, not all staff are able to lead live lessons whilst being at home.

This does not mean that we are not being forward-thinking in developing our use of IT. As stated earlier, more of our staff are developing their use of recording video instructions or voiceovers to their lessons and we are very excited to be moving to the next stage of our integration with Microsoft Teams. We have spent the past two years upgrading our IT infrastructure and over May half term will be synchronising Teams with our internal database. This will enable us to take advantage of much more of what Office 365 and Teams has to offer going forward. This changeover will mean that on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, students will not be able to access their Office365 accounts. This will give them a good excuse to move away from their screens and take some time out to do some of the other activities we have put in our Families' Bulletin.

Finally, I will be meeting with the board of Trustees during the first week back after half term and will write to you all with an update on developments for Years 10 and 12 soon afterwards.

In the meantime, I would like to thank you all for your continued support over this half term and wish you all a safe and relaxing week.



Ms Jo Meloni
Headteacher

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