



From the Headmaster - 22 June 2020

Year 10 and Year 12 Face-to-Face sessions

There is no doubt that it has been really uplifting to see significant numbers of students in Years 10 and 12 attending face-to-face sessions in school with their teachers. I would like to publicly thank staff for enabling this to happen alongside an increasing number of 'Teams' sessions to supplement the work set on Satchel:One (SMHW). However, this positive experience has reminded us of just how hard it is for those who do not have this opportunity. If your child is struggling, please do get in touch with their Head of Year so we can establish how we can best support them:

Year 7 Mrs J Robinson: jrr@strs.org.uk

Year 8 Mr Z Hinds: zfh@strs.org.uk

Year 9 Mr N O'Neil: no@strs.org.uk

Year 10 Mr D Tilley: dpt@strs.org.uk

Year 12 Mr B O'Neill: bjo@strs.org.uk

Alternatively, you are welcome to contact the Head of Key Stage:

Head of Key Stage 3: Rhys Davies rmd@strs.org.uk

Head of Upper School: Peter Daniell pmd@strs.org.uk

Head of Sixth Form: Matthew Lynch mtl@strs.org.uk

Guidance for Pupils Using Teams

The introduction of Teams has been a positive experience for all as a result of the expertise and flexibility of teachers and the enthusiasm and diligence of pupils. I have attached a guidance document for students so that everyone can continue to make the most of these sessions. Technical support regarding Teams can be found [here on our website](#). Teams timetables have been emailed to pupils and are also available on SharePoint.

Friday 26 June (Inset)

This Friday is an Inset day, so I have advised teachers that they needn't set work for their classes and Teams lessons will also not routinely take place. Staff will be working hard, attending training on subject-specific pedagogies to deliver the curriculum, on further use of new technologies and curriculum mapping to aid learning and planning for September.

Plans for September

Last week, Gavin Williamson confirmed that the government intends for all children to return to school in September. The Education Secretary said advice for schools on planning their full reopening in September will be published in the next two weeks. I hope to inform you of our plans as soon as I am able, but we have no more details other than those already in the public realm and ministers haven't always been able to keep to their self-imposed deadlines. We continue to model various scenarios, but I would like to reassure parents that the safety of the pupils and teachers lies at the heart of all our decision-making coupled with the desire to have as many pupils back in school as soon as possible.

Catch up programmes

A £1bn 'Covid catch-up plan' has also been launched by the Government to help children who have fallen behind. Again, I have no further details, but I suspect we may not benefit much from this new funding stream. It is important that 'catch-up' follows an evidence-based approach that enables teachers to review each child's current learning, then to plan their curriculum needs, and we will take this approach regardless of the national context. I would reiterate my strong advice that pupils should endeavour to do the work currently being set; communicating with their teachers via email and Satchel:One (SMHW) and participating in Teams lessons where available.

Summer Opening / Arrangements for pupils coming in to School (children of Critical Workers and vulnerable children)

The School currently continues to be open for children of Critical Workers and vulnerable children. It is unclear if we will be expected to remain open over the summer break to continue to provide this service, however, it is likely that the school may have to close to all pupils for two weeks during the summer break to allow essential planned maintenance work to take place. If your circumstances have changed or you have any queries in relation to this, please email Dave Dempsey: dd@strs.org.uk. We will continue to follow the advice from Public Health England with respect to social distancing and other protective measures. We will continue to:

- encourage regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap throughout the day
- ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach
- clean more frequently to remove the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails,

table tops, etc.

- operate a one-way system around the school

Mental Health, well-being and safeguarding

A reminder that there is a CAMHS helpline available for children, young people and families who may require support and advice from the NHS: Telephone 01452 894300 (9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday). Additionally, TiC+ counselling services can offer counselling remotely and details of how this is available is on their website www.ticplus.org.uk.

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can email DSL@strs.org.uk.

Finally

I have found it difficult to see the teaching profession being criticised so widely in the press over the last week or so. Our experience is one of planning relentlessly against a backdrop of ever-changing guidance, and understandable concerns which the pandemic has caused. Of course, at the heart of any robust educational philosophy is that we can all always learn from our experiences, yet I have witnessed so many good people trying to achieve much in these challenging circumstances. One day, when these times have passed, we'll be able to reflect on what we accomplished. Before then, here's a final thought from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*:

"The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater."

Garde ta Foy

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