



Heathcote School & Science College

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Headteacher: Emma Hillman NPQH, MSc, MA

Date: 1st December 2020



Dear Parent/Carer,



I am hugely impressed with the continuing way the school community are dealing with the on-going challenges of Covid-19 and, in particular, Year 11 and Year 13 and their commitment to learning and their future pathways. Year 7 have also made a fabulous start. We are very lucky compared to other local schools in having been able to keep so many pupils in school; although it may not feel like that for some of you! Please continue to check Parent Mail regularly as there will be plenty of updates over the next few months.



We will not be able to share full details of timetable, curriculum and risk assessment changes at this stage as we will still be working on this based on the latest Government guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. However, I will tell you that we hope to be able to re-introduce setting in classes for core subjects in Key Stage 3 now lockdown has ended. I know many of you will be keen to hear this.



I am writing this time with some important updates for the next few days and weeks. All these actions have been carefully considered and I would appreciate your support with these and trust that all these decisions have been made for the good of the school and ultimately the progress of your child. **Please read the letter carefully to ensure you have understood the plans and rationale and make notes of this in your diary.**



Learning and Pastoral Update

In a recent staff survey, a number of staff have expressed concern about their confidence levels in delivering remote lessons and many have not yet had to do this. Added to this, some pupils have not yet experienced live learning from home. Governors provisionally approved our Remote Learning Policy on Monday this week and we will be publishing this on the website after approval at the Full Governing Body meeting on Monday 14th December. We continue to read the latest research about what makes a successful remote lesson; of which is being published currently and will adapt and improve our format for these lessons as we, and other teachers and educators, learn more about how children learn best in this scenario.



supporting individual excellence



Having given out over 150 laptops and Chrome Books, we know that nearly all pupils have easy and sole access to a computer to access these lessons and resources but *we need further opportunity to see how this works in reality*. I have made an appeal to the DfE for additional numbers of laptops as in the last set of phone calls, we has already identified a further set of pupils whose circumstances had changed (for example parents were now working at home and needed the laptop or new arrivals to the school).



In terms of communication with you, Heads of Year have felt very strongly that they would like an opportunity to record an informative presentation for parents and carers. This would include a short slot from tutors as well as various explanations such as how to read reports to help you to understand where your child is. We hope to add more tutor time to pupils' timetables after Christmas as we feel this is important to have this continuity and relationship to ensure pupils are thriving and safe and happy and have a chance to discuss issues outside of the curriculum, hence it is important that you know who they are. Many staff are working from home in their free periods to meet the requirements of the risk assessment so we are keen, as a one-off, to give staff further opportunities to work together in the building (with much lower pupil capacity) to create this resource.

Actions to be taken

I would not normally condone partial school closure (although learning will be continuing in this case) but I am hugely mindful of staff well-being and very grateful to my team for all their resilience. I realise this comes shortly after an INSET day but this was pre-planned in advance. I am confident that this package of support should ensure that any future offer is more equitable for all learners and improve communication as well as ensuring Year 11 get the same opportunities as other year groups.

For these reasons above, we have consulted with the LA and Governors and have agreed the following. I would have liked to have given you more notice but have only had this signed off today:

Friday 4th December

Pupils will leave school after lunch and will need to log on to Google Classroom in the afternoon where there will be resources and tasks set. We will expect all pupils to log on and will follow up with those that do not do this. Heads of Year will use the time in school to lead the session with tutors in the afternoon to record the Information Event for parents and carers of each year group which will be accessible for all on Wednesday 9th December. Please ensure you make the time to watch this with your child to ensure you have a better understanding of who your child's tutor is, reports, the year group achievements etc.

Monday 7th December

Pupils will not attend school on this day and all pupils will need to log on to 2 live lessons during period 1 and 2. This will provide the experience and practice needed by staff and pupils. Attendance registers will be taken and any absence followed up as normal.

In the afternoon, pupils will need to log on and work through the resources; uploading any work as directed. In school, we want to provide staff with the chance to organise their Google Classroom resources and continue to attend training in remote learning – and that is why lessons will not be live.

The exceptions to pupils not being in school on Monday 7th are the following:

- **Construction Learners Year 12 – pupils should attend as usual – pupils should bring a packed lunch – this will be provided for pupils with free school meals.**
- **Food Tech Learners Year 11 B – Practical Exam Group as previously requested – pupils should bring a packed lunch – this will be provided for pupils with free school meals.**
- **CNat Sport Year 11 – pupils will be sitting a mock exam and should attend school in the afternoon – further details will follow from Mr French.**
- **Any key worker or vulnerable pupil who needs a place in school. Please e mail teaching.learningadmin@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk by Thursday at 9 am to request a place on the Friday or Monday afternoon. We cannot accommodate huge numbers of pupils but will of course support where we can.**

If you have any problems accessing lessons or materials on the Friday afternoon or Monday morning, please do not hesitate to contact the Teaching and Learning Team - details outlined above. Please also contact them in advance if you have any concerns.

On the Monday, we will offer a free school meal collection service and again let this team know if you would like to collect a meal **by 9 am on Thursday** – these will be available for collection between 12 and 12.30 from reception.

Wednesday 9th December

Year group Information Sessions that were recorded on the Friday afternoon will go live.

Start of Spring Term 2021

Year 11 Transition

We are keen that the school becomes a 7 year journey for most of our learners and the proportion of the Sixth Form who are Heathcote pupils has increased significantly over the last few years. This is more important now than ever when there are many benefits to Year 11 staying on at school such as the benefit of knowing the environment and teachers and also the ease of the journey to school in a Covid or post Covid world. For this reason, it is really important that Year 11 have the opportunity of a Transition Day to experience Sixth Form life and teaching and their future pathways are more important than ever before. We will already have a staggered start back on Tuesday 5th January (details to follow) but on the 6th January, we would like all Year 11s to have the opportunity to attend a Sixth Form Taster Day in the Sixth Form Building.

Wednesday 6th January

Due to Covid restrictions and to accommodate the Year 11 Transition Day, **all Sixth Formers** will need to stay at home and undertake remote learning on this day. BTEC Sport pupils will need to attend school in the main building in the morning to take an exam – further details to follow for Year 11, 12 and 13. *All other pupils should attend as normal.*

Summary

Friday 4th December – pupils to go home after lunch and work at home in the afternoon and log onto Google Classroom at lesson times – attached again for ease of reference. Registers will be taken by staff and non-attendance followed up.

Monday 7th December – pupils to work at home all day as above but lessons 1 and 2 will be delivered live in nearly all cases.

Wednesday 9th December – Information Session goes live.

Wednesday 6th January – all Sixth Form pupils to stay at home except BTEC Sport Year 12 and 13 pupils who will be completing an exam in the morning in the main building.

End of Term

Finally, the term will end after lunch on Friday 18th December. Pupils will be in tutor groups in the morning to ensure a fun and upbeat end to term. We do not yet know the form

group winners of the Odd Sock Day fundraiser who will earn a non-uniform day next term, but we will allow pupils to *wear non-school uniform on the last day of term* but this must have a Christmas theme such as a Christmas jumper. Prizes will be awarded for the most original outfit.

Thank you for your support – this is a great community and we should be very proud.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emma Hillman". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Emma Hillman