

16th July 2020

Dear parents and carers,

We have finally reached the end of the strangest year of school I have ever known. What has characterised this period at Cansfield has been the kindness and care with which all members of our community have navigated these uncharted waters together. I am incredibly proud of our team, particularly given that I have been able to staff the school entirely with colleagues who have volunteered to come in throughout the crisis, including through the Easter holidays and May half term. Likewise, our students have been incredible, with behavioural standards in school being very high, while the regular feedback from those students who have remained at home has been fantastic. The interactions with parents and carers have been wonderful, with absolute clarity that we all have the same goal, which is to support your children to be happy and to become the best they can be. Below are a few messages I want you to have before we break up for the summer, but the key one is a massive thank you for your support in getting through this period, which we have done as a single community and we will emerge from this crisis stronger as a result.

Reflecting on our provision during the partial school closure

The last four months have been unprecedented. We have had to make huge decisions about how we are supporting our students at the same time as addressing Government advice that has frequently changed. We have spent considerable time reflecting on the provision we have put in place because it is possible that at some point in the future we may have a second period of partial closure.

Over the last few months I have received hundreds of messages from parents and carers giving us feedback. We have had almost unanimous positive feedback for the farewell we gave our Year 11s, the regular communication we have had with families, the provision for Key Worker children and vulnerable students and for the remote learning work that we have provided. The two key areas where I feel we can improve in light of your feedback are:

- End of unit assessments that are formally marked for all. Lots of students have dropped off hard copies of work, emailed in or spoken directly to their teachers over the phone, and have received detailed feedback on work completed. However, more could be done to formalise this so that there are common assessments that all students complete for a set date and all get detailed feedback for.
- Provide work in smaller, more manageable half-termly blocks. We put months of work on our website early on. While some of you have said this was a good move as it facilitated planning, other students felt this overwhelming. On reflection having each Faculty have a completely consistent approach to this whereby they upload a unit of work for a half term with an assessment point at the end would help give a clearer structure and end point for students.

A big issue that we have had to reflect on is whether to move to a delivery model that is solely computer-based. We looked at the use of Google Classrooms early on but following a school-wide survey it became apparent that more than a quarter of our students do not have access to a

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computer or tablet or to the internet. As such, we believe it is an ethical duty to continue to ensure that the core of our provision can be accessed via computer and paper.

We very much hope that we do not find ourselves in a position where an extended period of partial school closure is necessary again. But if such an eventuality did occur, we would keep a strong focus on regular contact with homes and provide remote learning that is centred on a work pack that will last for 6-8 weeks and has a final assessment that will be marked formally by teachers for all students. This may be supplemented with extension activities that include computer-based resources such as Sam Learning, Seneca and materials from the Oak National Academy as well as books that we will provide. If you would like to give any further feedback, please feel free to email me – your thoughts are very much appreciated and will be carefully reflected on.

Getting ready for September 2020

We are expecting to have a full return of all students and staff in September. My main priority, as ever, will be to ensure the safety of everyone in our community. Our provision will certainly include: a rigorously enforced one way system around the school to avoid unnecessary contact between members of our community, a limited lunch offer to ensure students can get into and out of the canteen as quickly as possible and an absolute focus on good hygiene practices and effective cleaning procedures throughout the school. In light of the continuous changing of Government advice (see the current debate around the use of facemasks, for instance) I will not be issuing a full overview of the provision that we will be putting in place until nearer the time. A week before the September start, when we have a clearer picture of the situation, I will be writing a further letter to parents and carers and another letter directly to students outlining the provision that we will have in place and how the return to school will work. This letter will be sent home via Royal Mail and uploaded on our website. For now, please rest assured that we will be doing everything that we can to minimise any risk of transmission within school. If you have any particular concerns in the meantime, please feel free to email me.

Uniform for September 2020

Just a quick reminder that we intend to return to school in September 2020 with students wearing full uniform as normal. Our uniform guidance can be found on the website and you are very welcome to email or ring in if you have any queries.

I will be in touch again towards the end of August. Any queries in the meantime please feel free to email me at g.baker@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk. I hope you have a lovely holiday and we look forward to seeing you again in the new academic year.

Best wishes,



Geoff Baker
Headteacher