



CANSFIELD

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

8th February 2021

Dear parents and carers,

It is now just over a month since the majority of our students began accessing work remotely and I wanted to update you on a number of different issues.

I should begin by saying that we have been overwhelmed by the manner in which students have engaged with remote learning provision. During last term we were able to hone our provision for remote learning when we had small groups isolating and we felt confident that the provision was of a very strong standard. However, we did not anticipate the high levels of take up. Engagement has been consistently above 95% and the standard of work has been superb. I am well aware that this reflects not only our students' hard work, but also the support that you have provided at home, which I know has not always been easy. I would also like to pass on a big thank you from everyone here at Cansfield to you all for the support that you have given staff over the last month. We have been inundated with daily messages of support and thanks, which have been gratefully received. I save these messages and share them with staff in a whole school email update on Friday and staff have been deeply moved by your kind words.

I hope it goes without saying, but we look forward to the return of all of our students to school and with it a return to some kind of normality. In the meantime, it has been heartening to see that the Cansfield spirit continues to live on in the daily interactions that are had by all members of our community.

Temporary Adjustment to Timings of School Day

Following conversations with students and parents I have made some changes to the timings of the school day to ensure regular time away from the screen. We have now ensured that there is five minutes between all lessons and that we have a slightly longer break and lunch:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 8.30-8.45 | Form |
| 8.45-9.40 | Period 1 |
| 9.40-9.45 | Comfort Break |
| 9.45-10.35 | Period 2 |
| 10.35-11.00 | Extended Break |
| 11.00-11.55 | Period 3 |
| 11.55-12.00 | Comfort Break |
| 12.00-12.50 | Period 4 |
| 12.50-1.45 | Extended Lunch |
| 1.45-2.40 | Period 5 |
| 2.40-2.45 | Comfort Break |
| 2.45-3.15 | Form |

I would encourage students to use the breaks to get away from the screen and either move around the house or get out and get some fresh air.

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Use of Cameras in Registration

We recognise that many of our students find the use of cameras during a Google Meet session anxiety inducing. While it is helpful to see students when teaching, the only thing that we would specifically ask is that all students ensure that they are seen by their form tutor at least once a week. This is so that we can fulfil our safeguarding duties. Where they are not seen, our attendance team will conduct home visits to check on the welfare of students.

Parents' Evening Feedback

In light of the current circumstances, we have moved to a system called SchoolCloud as a platform to deliver parents' evenings remotely. We have used the system already with a number of year groups and the feedback I have had from staff and parents has been universally positive. The platform ensures that every meeting starts and ends exactly on time. The only downside is that you do not get to see the school and the developments that have happened to the premises year by year. Looking ahead, I am considering moving to this system for all parents' evenings. We would supplement these by hosting an annual open evening for existing students and their parents so you can walk around the school and have a look at how things have developed, speak with staff and look at work etc. Once you have used SchoolCloud, any feedback on this idea would be very much appreciated.

Year 11 Updates

The consultation on how Year 11s are awarded grades was completed on Friday 29th January. We understand that the Government will be sharing their final decisions on this on Monday 22nd February. As soon as we know how grades are to be arrived at, we will update all Year 11 students and parents and make plans for how to move forward. In the meantime, I want to congratulate the whole year group for their resilience during this very unsettling period, particularly as attendance in Google Meets continues to be high and all work has been completed to a good standard.

Period Products

I am grateful to the group of students who drew my attention to this. If any student is struggling to access sanitary products, we have significant stocks of these available at school. Karen Smith, our Office Manager, oversees these and can be contacted at k.smith@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk. Parents and students are welcome to contact Karen and it will be handled in a discreet manner, with packs made available for collection from the Office.

Wellbeing Support

While the distribution of vaccinations has brought in view an end to the changes that the pandemic has caused, I am well aware that we still have many students who are struggling with their mental health. If this is the case, then please do not hesitate to contact school – by ringing in or emailing – and we can ensure that provision is put in place. In addition to teaching and support staff who know your children well, we also have 14 Mental Health First Aiders and an on-site counsellor. All of the support we can provide is available on-site or remotely.

Technical Support

If you are having any technical issues, including computer-based problems or issues accessing the internet, please drop Lisa Shoreman, our Senior Assistant Headteacher, a message at l.shoreman@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk and we will do what we can to support.

At School

School continues to remain open for the children of Key Workers and those students deemed to be vulnerable. In addition to this, we have a number of significant building projects that are ongoing, which include: the creation of a leading-edge catering room; the refurbishment of the DT room (with new laser cutters and 3D printers); the refurbishment of the gym; the redesignation of the garages; every English and Maths room in the school having new carpets and tables. We are also soon to embark on a major building project, whereby Cansfield will get a front door ... more on this to come in the following months. In short, we have lots of exciting developments ongoing in the school for when our students return.

Thank you again for all of your support – as ever, it is a delight to serve you and your wonderful children. If you have any concerns, questions or comments then you are very welcome to drop me a message directly at g.baker@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GB', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Geoff Baker