

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020



King Henry VIII Senior School  
Warwick Road  
Coventry  
CV3 6AQ

Headmaster: Jason Slack BSc, MA Ed

Dear Parent,

I hope that you and your families are well. After the intensity of switching to 'online learning' last term, the Easter break was well received by all at school. Helped by the lovely weather, it gave some welcome respite and change from the new 'normal' that was established during last term.

### **Online Learning**

The normal school timetable will resume on Thursday. Form tutors are expecting to register pupils at 8:45am. Whilst Year 11 and Year 13 have their own priorities which are determined by external examinations, subject lessons for everyone else will start with period 1 at 9:00am.

You may recall the questionnaire that was sent out at the end of last term to pupils and parents and thank you to all those that took the time to respond. I have carefully looked at the results so that we can further improve our provision as we move forward. Some of the main findings are given below.

#### ***Pupil Questionnaire***

- 98% of pupils could access 'Teams' all or most of the time.
- 100% of pupils have had some interaction with teachers through Teams and 74% of pupils said that direct interaction with a teacher in line with timetabled lessons had happened in all or most of their subjects.
- 33% of pupils explained that they had too much work to do in all or most subjects. Although 88% claimed that they were up to date with this work.
- 62% of pupils said that they did not see an increase in the amount of work already being received. This might not surprise some parents!

In addition, pupils were very appreciative about the direct contact and 'face to face' interaction with staff, and also of the more visual techniques such as using the whiteboard facility within Teams.

#### ***Parental Questionnaire***

- 99% of parents stated that their children could access 'Teams' all or most of the time.
- 100% of parents stated that their children had had some interaction with staff via 'chat' or live lessons in 'Teams', with 73% stating that this was in all or most subjects.
- 46% of parents stated that their child had too much work to do in some subjects.
- 66% of parents believed that their child needed no more work to do in any subject.

In addition parents explained that their child benefitted from the stability and routine that school was providing, including pastoral points of contact such as assemblies and registration.

Parents also asked about amounts of homework – particularly if this involved children spending several more hours each evening looking at a screen. Staff will continue to set limited amounts of meaningful homework where it helps to reinforce material covered during a lesson. However, as is usual at this time of year, the nature of homework will start to change and increasingly become centred on preparation for end of year exams and revision.

The questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive. There were some points that were raised that require some consideration:

- The amount of work being set for pupils.
- The intensity of the day for some pupils, including having to spend extended time in front of a screen.
- The use of 'One Note' and the potential that it may unlock to vary approach and assessment.

Staff have been working hard to improve our provision in light of this useful feedback. This has included an INSET day which is taking place today when we have considered the balance and amount of work that we are giving. Moving forward, we are hoping to balance the time in front of the screen with some work that can be done away from the screen. We are also looking at improving our use of other functionality within 'Teams' meetings such as 'Whiteboard' and also explore greater use of 'One Note' to help the learning process.

We are looking at relieving the intensity of the day by recreating the natural 'pauses' that happen in between lessons at school as pupils finish lessons and move between teaching rooms. Teachers have been asked to finish periods 1, 3, and 5 slightly earlier (just 5 minutes), so that pupils can get up from the computer, walk around and get some fresh air (if possible), before starting the next lesson. This may prevent pupils staring at a screen, without a break, for 2 hours at a time.

Registration	8:45am – 9:00am
Period 1	9:00am – 9:45am
Period 2	9:55am – 10:45am
Period 3	11:10am – 11:55am
Period 4	12:05pm – 12:55pm
Period 5	2:15pm – 3:00pm
Period 6	3:10pm – 4:00pm

Staff have also been reflecting upon their experience of 'online teaching'. And their impressions have also been very positive. Whilst we did suspend the use of the 'chat' facility for a period of time within 'Teams', this caused more problems than it solved and we have now reinstated this function. It would help staff if pupils avoided emails to teachers during lessons in favour of communicating through this 'chat' function. Emails can get lost in a busy inbox but messages are better contextualised to the 'Team', and the lesson, if sent via 'chat'. It may not surprise you to know that several pupils have managed to cause frustration through not reading instructions carefully before asking questions of the teacher. Please could we ask you to encourage your children to read 'assignments' carefully before asking questions about them. The start of a lesson can become delayed by unnecessary questions from pupils sending messages to staff that have already been answered in the text of an 'assignment'. Of course, we will be reinforcing these messages ourselves!

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

School had some extra-curricular activities in the two weeks before Easter half term (such as Rock School challenges and Outdoor Education Club). Several further clubs are planned for the coming weeks and we will let you know of these opportunities when they arise. Similarly, if you have any creative ideas as to what clubs could be provided then please let me know.

### **End of Year Exams**

End of year exams will take place for all pupils in Years 7 - 10 and Year 12. Exam timetables will be issued in due course. These exams will be administered as 'assignments' through Year Group 'Teams', with most subjects using the 'Forms' App within the Office 365 suite of programs. Further details will follow but it is important that your child has a structured and effective revision program in place so that they are fully prepared for these exams. The results will be commented upon in end of year reports, as usual, at the end of term.

### **Communication with Home**

I will continue to send regular letters home that aim to keep everyone well informed of our educational provision and thank you to the numerous parents who have expressed their appreciation of these emails. The parental questionnaire showed that 86% of parents are reading our weekly 'InTouch' bulletin and I would encourage you all to follow our news on InTouch. We also make extensive use of our Twitter feed with numerous tweets each day although only 46% of parents stated that they followed our Twitter account. I would encourage you to please follow our 'feed', @khviiiischool. It tends to be fun and light hearted and will hopefully make your day slightly better for reading our posts!

Whilst the coming weeks and months will continue to contain uncertainty for the country, King Henry VIII School would hope to provide some stability and structure to the lives of your children and provide them with purpose and direction. It should not be the case that the broader development of our young people is significantly compromised for reasons outside of their control. Please be reassured of our best efforts and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



J. Slack  
Headmaster