Dear Parent/Guardian

We hope that you, your families and friends are continuing to remain safe and well. Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on Sunday May 10th and subsequent guidance from the Department for Education, I feel it is a good time to contact you to update you on the current situation at Saltley Academy. Having spoken to many parents during lockdown, I know that home learning has brought great insight, joy and, at times, frustration. I am deeply humbled by the job that you are doing everyday supporting with the home education of your child and sincerely hope that you have found the work set by staff useful and purposeful. Please remember that members of staff at Saltley are always available to speak to you via email during the school day and we love to hear from children and parents.

As you will probably be aware, the government published guidance about planning to welcome more children back to school. For us at Saltley this means we may be able to partially open from 8th June, as long as the safety indicators permit, for Year 10 students to support them with their remote learning. However, what form this will take in the long term is currently unclear and we are planning several scenarios. However, in the short term we would like to see each Year 10 for a welfare meeting in school. This meeting will be conducted with your son/daughter’s form tutor over a video link, with the teacher remaining at home. We feel that this is an appropriate first step towards returning back to school.

Taking this approach will allow us to control many variables that are essential for your child and the staff at Saltley. This initial plan will mean that each student has their own appointment time, which will be staggered away from other students. We will split the year group over 2 days, to give enough space and time for each student to attend their meeting whilst maintaining strict social distancing.

On arrival at school, your child will be directed to a side entrance where queuing and entrance to the school can be closely controlled by the Leadership Team and myself. On entering your child will have to wash their hands thoroughly and be given the option to wear a face mask that will be provided. No other face masks will be allowed on site. Once in school your child will attend the video meeting in an isolated room, which will be cleaned for each use. During the meeting your child will discuss their progress with their remote learning, talk about any difficulties, check on their welfare and also have the opportunity to see the Leadership of the school face to face in a controlled environment should they wish. I must stress the importance of your son/daughter adhering to the social distancing rules, to and from school which will be their responsibility, but we will ensure there are only a handful of students making their way to and from school at any one time. Once at home your child should change their clothes and wash them, and it is recommended to shower before making contact with the rest of the family.

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We believe this model will allow us to adhere to the strict guidelines given to us by the government, allowing us to safely open, but also to evaluate what is working and what needs to be improved if we are to expand on this model. It is hoped that in the following week a similar process would happen but instead of a meeting your child would attend a remote learning session by a subject specialist in English, Maths or Science. After we have completed this cycle, we will be in position to plan for the remaining weeks of term, and consider if it is acceptable or not to increase our offer. During your child’s time in school they will also be provided with much needed resources and learning materials for their remote learning in the coming weeks and the summer holidays.

It also seems, from the guidance given, that Year 7, 8 and 9 students will not return to us until September, at the earliest. This means that students will need to ensure that they commit to doing their very best with their home learning and engage with all pieces of work that are being set by subject staff. I know that for some that these plans will be reassuring and for others it will be deeply frustrating. Although we are all desperate to see our pupils back in school, the safety of our children is paramount.

We will continue this week to review government guidance and will work closely with the Local Authority; the Department for Education and other Head Teachers of Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust to ensure any plans made carefully take into account the safety of all students and staff involved.

As soon as we have any final details regarding updated plans for Saltley Academy we will, of course, make contact and let you know.

Until further notice, arrangements remain the same as in previous weeks and Saltley will continue to be closed for ALL students except for vulnerable students or children of key workers. We will continue to provide home learning assignments for all other pupils. Details of all of these arrangements can be found on our website at http://saltley.academy/

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions about home schooling, key worker status or school support; please do not hesitate to contact us, or look at the school website which has lots of useful resources and links. As always please be kind to yourself, you are doing an amazing job at a very difficult time. When the time comes to re-open for our children, we will work hard to pick up the baton and continue to care for your children with compassion, care and wisdom.

We will provide further information in the forthcoming days but in the meantime, stay safe, stay well.

Yours sincerely,

P. White

Mr P White
Acting Head of School