Dear Parents

I write to you in advance of our opening for Year 10 pupils commencing the 17th of June. Hopefully by this point you should have received an appointment time, had a follow up phone conversation with your child’s Form Tutor and had a chance to look at the video on our website that shows the safety measures we have put in place for a safe reopening. The link for the video is here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgS5UcCfZTg

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is for your child to start to return back to school. In normal circumstances we would be close to finishing the year of studies and planning for revision and recap of knowledge and skills throughout all of year 11. Obviously now there is a large gap that we must fill, as well as prepare students for their exams. Whilst you have played the role of parent and teacher exceptionally well throughout the lockdown period, it is right that you allow us to take over the education part, and start maximising the time we have left this year.

Hopefully you will have noticed that I have taken a very cautious approach to re-opening. The devastating effect Covid-19 is having on BAME families is alarming, and one I take very seriously. Whilst I am certain of our dedication to your child’s education, I must also place the welfare of my staff at the heart of any plans to re-open. Having spent the week in school last week, preparing and completing our risk assessment, I am confident we can re-open safely, and say honestly and truthfully that I believe it is time for you to place your trust in us, and send your child into school at their pre-arranged time from this week.

There are however safety considerations that are essential in allowing your child and staff to return to school:

1) Do not send your child to school if they have: A) a high temperature – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back. B) They have developed a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. C) They have developed a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

2) Only send your child to school if someone is available at all times to collect them if they develop symptoms whilst at school. We have changed our first aid procedures and have all new PPE for first aiders to wear, but it is essential that in this circumstance a child must safely be collected, taken home and monitored.

3) Ensure that your child strictly follows social distancing when travelling to and from school. I am sad to say that whilst preparing the school for re-opening I have personally observed multiple interactions of our students outside of school not adhering to government guidance. This is very disappointing, and I urge parents to be certain of what their child is doing outside of the home environment at all times. I must warn you that if I feel students are not following these strict guidelines, I will not continue with our plans to re-open the school, as this simple act of ignoring this guidance can place staff and students at risk, which is something I will not tolerate.
4) Send your child to school in clean clothes every day. This can be school uniform or non-school uniform, this is your choice. The most important part is that the clothes are clean and fresh daily, and when your child returns home from school, they should shower and the clothes they were wearing should be washed immediately.

In the first days of attendance your child will be asked to sign a remote learning agreement. A copy of this will be in the pack your child will bring home. This will be essential for us to increase our offer of virtual lessons, provided inside and outside of school. In addition to this new agreement, our behaviour and safeguarding policy has been updated with specific relevance to Covid-19, and your child will be informed about this. Essentially, in brief, if your child places another child’s or staff’s safety at risk, by any action, they will sanctioned appropriately and instructed to carry out all future learning remotely - they will not be welcome in school if we cannot trust them to do so safely.

Included with this letter is our proposed timetable for the week beginning the 22rd of June. This model will see your child in a closely monitored and regulated “bubble”. Bubbles have been designed carefully so that they will only receive teaching for the subjects that they are studying. A copy of this and further explanation will be given to your child during their meeting.

During our initial phase of re-opening, there will be no food consumed on school site, and the canteen will remain closed until further notice. Pupils can bring a water bottle into school with them, and we will continue with the Free School Meals Voucher Scheme during this period.

I have been relentlessly chasing the promised laptops form the Government for priority Year 10 pupils since the announcement was made. I received an update today, which disappointingly states there is still no confirmed date of delivery, and that students with a social worker and care workers are still being prioritised. I know this has been a source of frustration for many families, and once again I would like to say that if I had the laptops in school, I would have found some way to lend them to you, but sadly this has not been possible. We do not have the funding to purchase new ones, and the ones we use in school are not suitable for use at home, with complexities about licences, networks and access to school servers. As soon as the laptops do arrive I will distribute them as quickly as possible.

Lastly, Saltley Academy is now working in partnership with the local government in providing emergency support to young people and families. The funding is strictly for emergencies due to Covid-19. The emergency funding is for families in hardship, for example to buy food, medicines, nappies and other supplies or to pay for emergency fuel or internet access.

Young people and families cannot apply directly. If you have an emergency need then please contact the school as a first step to access Resilience Funding. More information on this funding can be found on the following website: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50224/birmingham_children_s_partnership/2156/birmingham_children_s_partnership_-_resources

Yours sincerely

P. White

Mr P White
Acting Head of School