



Monday 22nd June 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope this finds you well? I thought it would be useful to provide an update on recent developments in school. As usual, I would also like to thank you for your support during the last few weeks. I look forward very much to being able to write the letter inviting all students back into school when the Government permits us to do so.

## **Remote Curriculum**

We continue to provide a fortnightly update for parents and carers on the work that students are being set through their Google classrooms. Click [HERE](#) to read the most recent fortnightly update.

We believe that families are in the best place to determine the work that their children are able to complete given their own unique family circumstances. The remote learning website provides a guide to the core expectations for study for each subject in each year group along with a host of extension and enrichment opportunities.

Following the recent parent survey, we shared the findings with teachers and subject leaders with a particular focus on responses to the “What is going well?” and “How we can improve” questions about our provision. We have subsequently received a number of emails from parents and students commenting on the increased use of video and narrated PowerPoint presentations and how this has helped remote learning this last month or so.

We continue to evaluate our provision at both school and subject level, to explore practice in other institutions and review emerging research in this field to ensure that the lessons we provide are as effective as they can be for our students.

## **Year 10 In-School Provision & Year 12 Live Lessons**

It has been wonderful to see Year 10 back in school for core provision. All students have shown a calm and mature approach when in school which has been very impressive. I know I represent the thoughts of all staff who have been involved in this element of our provision so far when I report that we feel immensely proud of you Year 10; as we do with all other students at this time.

We have also been delighted by the response to our first week of G-meets with Year 12. We have had lots of positive

feedback from staff and students about the quality of this provision alongside the remote learning that is also being set and how lovely it was to interact with each other.

Each week we will send out the timetable of provision to you and to students so they can plan their week around the G-meet and remote learning that continues to be set. Mrs Knapton and Mrs Lawson (our Careers Manager) are setting up some G-meets to go through the UCAS application form and process and students can sign up to these via the weekly bulletin she shares with students every Monday.

### **Free School Meals**

As a school we recognise the enormous impact the pandemic is having on so many families, including the financial strain that may have arisen for some households and the ongoing financial worry and pressure for others. If you are one of the many households where the income is low, your child may well qualify for Free School Meals. Indeed, since the beginning of lockdown, we have seen a significant rise in successful applications.

If you wish to apply for Free School Meals, you can complete the application form provided by the Local Authority from where you live.

If you live in North Yorkshire - [Free school meals](#)

If you live in York - [Eligibility for free school meals – City of York Council](#)

If you live in Leeds - [How to claim free school meals](#)

In addition to securing free school meals, your child would also become eligible for Pupil Premium funding. This provides school with money that we utilise to support your child with additional educational opportunities - [Pupil premium - GOV.UK](#).

As a school we strive to offer additional educational opportunities to all students and do not want home financial difficulties to be a barrier. We are here to support. Please feel free to contact our Pupil Premium lead in school, Mrs Hubbard (v.hubbard@tgs.starmat.uk) or your child's House Leader to discuss these matters further.

### **Uniform 2020/21**

You may remember we wrote to parents back in the Autumn Term about our wish for students in Year 10 and 9 to move into the new gender neutral uniform from September 2020, as Chalks Shop could no longer stock two uniforms. At that time we did not wish to enforce this with families as we have always been mindful of the cost of uniform. This still stands, as we understand times are even more financially challenging for many.

However we also know that a lot of our students, especially many of our girls would like to move into our new gender neutral uniform. They love the blazer. Our new uniform is smart, but more importantly upholds the principles of equality and was championed by our students. We also believe that a move into the new uniform for all but Year 11 would be a highly powerful and unifying act for us as a school community when we come back together after this period of enforced separation.

With this in mind we would urge parents when purchasing uniform in the coming months to move your child into the new uniform. **Please note students are not permitted to wear a mixture of the new and the legacy uniform.** If families are struggling to purchase the new uniform we are looking at ways we can support these purchases. With this

in mind we would like to remind parents of the Uniform Upcycling Scheme that is being launched from The Barn in Tadcaster from July.

Mrs Chalk wrote to parents a little while ago to explain how she would operate once she was able to reopen. The shop itself is not open for visitors, but we are happy to inform you that the Chalks Team is busy taking bookings for appointments so that school uniform can be purchased in a safe and socially distanced way.

Finally for those students who were previously in Wharfe House, please know that if you are Year 8, 9 and 10 we will supply you with a new tie free of charge. This will be available for you from your tutor when we return to school.

### **Reporting to parents**

Our published 'reporting to parents' calendar (which includes parents evenings) has been paused since the national lockdown commenced.

Whilst all students in school have had at least one report this year, and in some cases more, we are particularly aware that the closure of schools occurred just as staff were starting to prepare reports home for Years 7, 8 and 9 and that the planned parents' evenings for Years 7 and 8 have had to be cancelled this term. We are also aware that the planned mock examinations for Year 12 (and the reporting of these results to parents) were not able to take place.

We have been considering carefully what information we can reasonably and accurately report to parents in terms of student progress and what steps we can put in place for next year.

To address the lack of parents' evenings this year we have moved the Year 8 parents evening (for the current Year 7 students) forward from the usual July slot and it will now take place in the autumn term 2020. There will also be a report sent home to parents in the autumn term.

The year 9 parents' evening (for the current Year 8 students) will remain in January to fit in with the KS4 options process but there will be a report sent home to parents in the autumn term. The Year 10 parents' evening (for the current Year 9 students) will take place in mid-March and there will be a report sent home to parents within the autumn term. As Year 12 students move into Year 13 we will place a parents evening in the autumn term and there also will be a report sent home to parents in the autumn term.

In addition we hope to hold a series of Year Group events during the Autumn term, so that parents can meet their child's new Year Leader and Pastoral Leader, alongside other key pastoral staff. These events will explore how school will support the learning and wellbeing of students.

### **And finally**

I am sure you have been following the rather disjointed narrative in the media recently about the Government's plans for 'catch-up' provision. As at the time of writing this letter, the fine detail of how the funding will be allocated and actual expectations on schools have yet to be announced. I know the issue of 'missed work' is an emotive one; as a parent of a Year 9 and a Year 12 in comprehensive education I sense this each day. We will of course keep you informed of our developing plans for the remote curriculum, key worker/most vulnerable provision, Year 10 and Year 12 'face-to-face' provision, plus our approach to using any additional Government funding, if indeed we receive this.

You may also have been interested in the national debate about the possible shape of the external examination sessions for summer 2021. Both the Government and OFQUAL (the public body overseeing national examinations) remain undecided, although it is apparent that the assessment instruments and approaches we will be asked to use in 2021 for year 11 and 13 will have to be different to previous years. OFQUAL have committed to consulting on their plans with students, families and schools before the end of term. We will share that information with you when plans are published and the consultation launched.

Finally, and most importantly, we hope that you have the confidence in the school knowing that when we are permitted to welcome more of our fantastic students back to the school site, all staff will work tirelessly to ensure each student's education and care is further optimised. In the meantime, our energies are focussed on ensuring our current programmes are as relevant and impactful as possible.

Regards,

**Mr A Parkinson**  
**Headteacher**