

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

1st June 2020

Dear parents, carers and students

Re – **Weekly Update 8**

I hope that you and your families remain safe and well. We are now beginning our 8th school week since we closed our doors to most students due to the government's lockdown measures. During this time, we have all had to quickly adapt to a very different way of working and learning and we continue to adapt to the new challenges that face us. I am hugely appreciative of your continued support of the school and your undertaking of supporting home learning for your child. I am so impressed with the remarkable resilience of our students, who continue to try their best while learning at a distance. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team of staff, who have risen to the challenges and adapted to the change, to support our students.

There is quite a lot to update you on this week.

Government guidance and updates:

- As you may have heard over the half term break, the government has announced that their '5 key tests' have been met that allow schools to open more widely from 1st June 2020. The government has also issued further guidance to secondary schools about the 'face to face' sessions for Year 10 and Year 12 students this half term, starting from 15th June at the earliest. The guidance can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-secondary-schools> and
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers>

For those of you with children in Year 10 and 12, further information about our plans for these sessions will be sent out to you by the end of this week.

- The government has also released further guidance for parent and carers about children's learning at home. This guidance can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Wellbeing

- The Sixth Form Student Leadership Team continues to provide students in all year groups with their weekly wellbeing guide this half term. This week's guide comes from Lucy Cook-Allen. It will be sent out by tutors via school email this week to students in all year groups. Thank you again to Lucy for this supportive and useful guide.

- **The Highfield School 5k Challenge**

As we are not able to go ahead with the school's summer term Sports' Day, the PE team have set a challenge instead! From 8th to 30th June, the PE team are challenging students and staff to walk, cycle, wheel or run 5k as many times as possible.

Each time a 5k is completed, staff and students will be asked to log it, through a link they will be sent on Show My Homework.

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

The PE team will post a weekly update on which house is in the lead via the PE twitter account @HighfieldPE and the winning house will receive the Sports' Day Cup. A fundraising page for the North/East Hertfordshire NHS has been created for the event. If you would like to donate, please visit <https://www.enhcharity.org.uk/appeal/5k-highfield-school-challenge>

- The Schools and Families Advice line is a new service established to provide emotional wellbeing advice and early help to children and young people and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you feel this service could help, please call 0300 777 0707 or email hpft.spa@nhs.net. You will get a call back from a mental health practitioner between 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. Support will be offered in a one-off, up to 1 hour phone call. The service can support with:
 - General concerns around mental well-being, coping strategies and self-care.
 - How to support children and young people in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak Supporting mental well-being during the transition back to school and the anxiety around this uncertainty.
 - Specific anxieties (around COVID-19/self-isolating measures, transition between year groups, developing and maintaining relationships, fear of failure, low self-esteem or aspirations, trust issues, social anxiety, etc.)
 - Phobias (animals/insects, specific food stuffs, specific objects, modes of transport etc.)
 - Low mood
 - Emotional regulation difficulties.
 - Mild obsessive compulsive difficulties that are starting to impact day to day activities.
 - Low-level behavioural concerns
 - Sleep difficulties
 - Signposting to services and resources that may be helpful for supporting mental wellbeing.

Teaching and Learning

Thank you to those of you who have provided us with feedback on the home learning teachers have been providing students over the past 8 weeks. Based on this feedback and on our review of home learning, we are making changes to the way we will set home learning from 8th June.

What will change:

- To support students in managing their home learning more effectively and to encourage continued engagement and motivation, subject teachers will ensure that work set on Show My Homework is clearly marked with the day and week it is to be completed. This will follow a weekly approach:

WEEKLY	Year 7 and 8	Year 9	Year 10
Monday	3 hours English	3 hours English	3 hours English
Tuesday	3 hours science	3 hours science	3 hours science
Wednesday	3 hours maths	3 hours maths	3 hours maths
Thursday	1 hour Art/Technology 1 hour MFL 1 hour Drama/Music	1.5 hours Geography/History Bridging Project	1.5 hours Geography/History 1.5 hours Option 1

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

		1.5 hours Option 1 Bridging Project	
Friday	1 hour Geography 1 hour History 1 hour ICT/RPS	1.5 hours Option 2 Bridging Project 1.5 hours Option 3 Bridging Project	1.5 hours Option 2 1.5 hours Option 3

- Learning resources may include a 'mini-lesson' (or equivalent) where narrated PowerPoints with a teacher's voice-over will explain and clarify key teaching points for the resources.

What will not change:

- Year 12 student work will be set in the usual manner
- Tasks and resources will continue to be set through Show My Homework, every two weeks, with the deadline set for the end of the two week period.
- Students should continue to get in touch with their subject teachers, using their school email address, with any questions or issues about the work
- For those students who do not have internet access and/or a computer or laptop at home, we will continue to send work packs through the post every two weeks.

Our recommendations:

- If your child has been struggling or has felt overwhelmed with home learning, please encourage your child to complete the relevant subject on its allocated day, sticking to the weekly timetable above
- Students may wish to submit work on the day is completed, rather than waiting for the deadline; this will help to support a sense of achievement for students
- Please remember that students may not complete everything that is set by each subject teacher in the allocated time; that is absolutely fine. Teachers are keen to see that students have tried their best with the work set.
- Students are encouraged to email their teachers on the day they are doing the work if they need support; teachers will do their best to be online regularly to respond to questions and clarifications promptly

As we now know, many of our students will not be physically back in school before September at the earliest. We are therefore continuing to look very carefully at how we provide home learning and strive for it to be as effective as possible in the circumstances. With this in mind, Miss Waseem, Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, will shortly be sending out a survey to gain your views and your child's views, on your child's learning at home. In the meantime, please get in touch with Miss Waseem on admin@highfield.herts.sch.uk if you have any questions about Teaching and Learning.

As always, if you would like to get in touch about anything, please contact admin@highfield.herts.sch.uk and we will do our best to help.

Wishing you all the best of health.

Kind regards

Caitlin Macrae
Headteacher