

14 July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

End of Term Update

As we approach the end of this academic year I would like to share with parent/carers an update before we finish for the Summer holidays. I will be writing a further letter to parent/carers this week that outlines in more detail how the school will operate in September 2020 in order to ensure that we follow the latest Covid-19 Guidance.

As with all schools, the last few months have brought challenges. I am proud of how the school has responded but I am equally grateful and full of admiration for our parent/carers who have faced a range of personal challenges but have still managed to ensure that their child learns at home.

As we look to September, the expectation is that the school will be open full time for all students. I appreciate that some parent/carers may be anxious but I strongly believe that having your child back in school will provide them with the best opportunity to integrate back into school life and catch up on areas of the curriculum that have been missed. Throughout the school closure we have placed the safety of staff and students at the forefront of our planning and I hope that when you see more detail about September 2020 you will be reassured. Due to the clear link between academic success and attendance we will prioritising our time during the first few weeks to ensure that all students are back in school learning.

One of the positive of Covid-19 is that it has forced us to reflect on our practice. Under significant time pressures we implemented our online learning platform. This blended approach to learning from home will be an essential part of school life for all students when we return full time in September. In addition to setting homework via Google Classroom we will be providing more opportunities to progress with their own learning as well as looking at providing catch up for students when they are off ill. One of the ways that we will be able to make the most of these opportunities is through our new website. It has taken some time to prepare but will be live for September 2020 and should be the first place parent/carers go if they want further information about the school.

During the school closure I know that the lack of computer facilities or access to the internet has been a real challenge for some students. I do not have any definite plans but I am committed to exploring ways that we can support all students to access the technology required to be successful. For parent/carers that are able to, I strongly recommend that you consider purchasing a Google Chrome Book. As part of our new digital strategy we will be looking at how we can use Google Chrome Books more widely in schools. For parent/carers that not able to purchase a Google Chrome Book I am actively looking at ways to make this possible and will share this with parent/carers in September.

September will feel different for all students and as much as possible our existing policies will remain unchanged. There will be a couple of changes that I should bring to your attention this side of the summer holidays. Firstly, we have adapted our school behaviour policy to reflect Covid-19 guidance. For example, school detentions that used to take place in the school hall, will now happen in Year Group Zones. We also have a new space in school called the 'Refocus Room'. This came out of conversations with parent/carers and staff. I have always been clear that good discipline promotes the right environment for students to flourish. This new space will give us flexibility to remove on the day any student that disrupts learning or fails to follow instructions. Students placed in this space will be required to complete a longer school day finishing at 15.55. When we return in September, Mr Loizou (Director of Learning: Behaviour & Standards) will write to parent/carers with more details about our updated Rewards and Behaviour Policy.

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A further change that I know will be significant for all students is that from September mobile phones and electrical devices will no longer be able to be used on the school grounds. This change is as a result to overwhelming feedback from staff regarding the negative impact phones have on school life and also the examples over the last year where phones have been used in a way that causes harm to others. The policy will be straightforward to follow and will be explained to all students in their first Form Time in September. The policy will also be circulated to all parent/carers as you will no longer be able to contact your child directly during the school day and will need to contact the school. This change brings the school in line with the vast majority of secondary schools and is supported by the latest academic research that shows that schools that do not allow phones perform better. It is also true that in relation to Covid-19 we are expected to put in place arrangements that limit use due to the risk of cross-contamination, so it is the right time to make this change.

I also want to cover the parent/carer survey regarding home learning that we asked you to complete in May. I do apologise that I did not share a summary of this earlier as it is important that all parent/carers are aware of the feedback that has been provided to the school and has helped inform our planning for September 2020. In summary:

- The vast majority of parent/carers felt that the amount of work set each day for students on Google Classrooms was about the right amount. Since this survey we looked at our online offer and hopefully your child completed their online assessments. The purpose of these assessment was to identify gaps in learning and also help prepare our curriculum for September.
- The structure of releasing lessons on a daily basis seems to have worked well and has provided students with a good daily routine.
- Parent/carers strongly felt that the move to Google Classrooms and the system that we put in from the start of the Summer term has worked well and have been able to get technical support when required.
- A significant amount of printed work packs have been sent home to help those without access to appropriate technology. This has been appreciated by parents. For the school this has identified the challenges some students have faced and as a school we need to make sure that a lack of access to technology does not impact student progress.
- A challenge for the school has been ensuring staff are keeping up with queries from students and parent/carers. We have worked with staff to make sure feedback is provide whilst also being mindful of teacher workload.
- One request raised quite frequently was around live lessons. As a school we have trialled pre-recorded/live lessons with some 6th Form classes. This has worked well and we now have a safeguarding protocol in place which means in the future we can look to use this further.
- Adapting our rewards system has meant that students working at home have been recognised and via the weekly student bulletins it has been a good opportunity to showcase excellent student work.
- A challenge identified by parent/carers was the impact on their child's emotional and mental well-being. Where concerns have been identified the school has been providing more regular contact with home in the form of phone calls. If parent/carers require further support for their child they should contact the School. In September it will be really important that concerns are communicated so that the school is able to support.
- Parent/carers identified that the new online learning platform could be adapted to provide homework and further learning opportunities for students when the school reopens. The School has plans to incorporate this from September.

Parent/carers of students who are entitled Free School Meals will be receiving a further communication from the School this week that sets out through our new provider how you are able to reclaim FSM vouchers for the last three weeks of term and for the summer break.

Finally, I would like to communicate to you some changes to the Senior Leadership Team for September 2020. Mr Maher, Deputy Headteacher, will be leaving to work at another school in the Trust. Mr Maher's role was always temporary and was about creating additional leadership capacity. I am delighted that Ms Sangster, Deputy Headteacher will be joining the school. Ms Sangster is an experienced Deputy Headteacher and joins us from Sarah Bonnell School in East London. This means for September there will be three Deputy Headteachers and in addition to their individual responsibilities, each will oversee a Key Stage and have overall responsibility for these year groups. Mr Hemsley will be responsible for Key Stage 3, Ms Sangster will be responsible for Key Stage 4 and Ms Major will be responsible for Key Stage 5. This year we have continued to strengthen the senior leadership of the

School and in addition to Mr Gibbons and Mrs Higgins who joined this academic year I am delighted that Mrs Otti, who has been at Welling for a number of years, has also been promoted to a Director of Learning for September 2020.

Please can I wish all parent/carers a restful summer break. The School will be closing at the end of this week and will not be open to any students. We look forward to welcoming our new Year 7s on Thursday 3 September, Year 8 – 12 on Monday 7 September and Year 13 from Tuesday 8 September. Whilst the school will be closed over the summer break we will be open around Results days in August and a letter confirming the arrangements for current Y11 and Y13 students will be sent out this week. If you have any questions regarding this letter or would like to contact the school over the summer break please contact the school on enquiries@wellingschool-tkat.org. This email address will be monitored.

With very best wishes.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Pett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr R Pett
Headteacher