

Knole Academy Covid-19 update 12 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I shall start by apologising that this communication will be full of uncertainties, I need to stress that, as a Headteacher, I receive no additional information on what is planned in light of Covid-19. This is simply my attempt to interpret the information available and explain how this will affect students at Knole Academy.

I would like to draw your attention to two publications that were made available yesterday evening; the first is from the Department for Education and the second a letter from the Minister for Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/details-on-phased-wider-opening-of-schools-colleges-and-nurseries?utm_source=1bd749ca-0e91-42b6-b61f-5232e089f2ad&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

As has been reported in the news, the focus is very much on returning some year groups within primary schools. At secondary schools the focus is on Year 10 and 12, the government guidance is:

“secondary schools, sixth form, and further education colleges to begin some face to face support with year 10 and 12 pupils, although we do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage.”

The provision is likely to commence on June 1st at the earliest and is conditional on many societal factors. To this end, later this week, we shall be sending an email to parents of Year 10 and 12 students to establish whether they wish to take up the offer of some face to face contact. If face to face contact were to resume, it would be under the following conditions as defined by the department for Education;

- To observe social distancing protocols we shall be limiting class sizes to between 10-15 students
- Students will stay in the same classroom and teachers shall move to them
- The focus will be on core subjects
- The Department for Education are advising that PPE is not necessary
- If a child develops symptoms of Covid-19 the entire class would have to self-isolate for 14 days

It is unlikely that there will be any school buses in operation and the government would prefer students not to use public transport, they are encouraging students to walk or cycle wherever possible, although I recognise with our catchment area this is not always feasible.

We do not have capacity for all Year 10 and 12 students at once and it is unlikely that social distancing could be maintained, therefore students would be on a rota and only attend on certain days. The government have made clear that if parents do not wish the children to attend they should keep them at home and rely on the remote learning resources. There will be no penalties for non-attendance.

We will probably set up the day with a 10.00am start and a 2.30pm finish. It will consist of 4 one hour lessons, a 10 minute break and a 20 minute lunch break. The breaks and lunch are short as social distancing would still need to be observed. We would not have caterers on site, so students would need to bring in a packed lunch, we shall continue to provide vouchers for free school meals.

I know, operationally, we have a number of staff who have been told to stay at home due to the heightened risk and many of us have seen first-hand the impact of the illness. I make no recommendation on whether students should return, I believe that parents know their own personal situation and are in the best place to make individual decisions. We will try to ensure that those who are unable to take up the offer of face to face contact are not disadvantaged.

After we have collated the information from Year 10 and 12 parents we shall send out individual invites to attend on certain days, please do not send your child to Knole Academy without an invite. If you were to indicate that you did not wish to take up provision and subsequently changed your mind, please contact the academy so your child can be added to the schedule.

It would appear that at this stage there are no plans for Year 7,8 and 9 students to return before September. I feel that this is a real shame, we all hope to a return to something approaching normality soon but the health of our families should always be paramount.

Please note that all of the above is subject to change.

Provision for vulnerable and key worker students remains unchanged.

Change to school calendar

The start of the new academic year in September is likely to be amended as I feel it is unlikely we shall return to normal by then, but I am an eternal optimist and hope that this will be the case. If there are changes we shall send them to parents as soon as we know. One change we have had to make regards our open evening. For those that have attended this event in the past you will know that we have over a thousand visitors in a three hour window come through the school. I do not believe that this would be appropriate. Therefore we have cancelled the event on Thursday 17 September and moved it to Saturday 19 September. On the Saturday we shall be open all day and restrict visitors to 150 per hour. The impact on the calendar is as follows:

	Originally	Current Plan
Thursday 17 September	1.15 pm finish	Normal day 3.30pm Finish
Friday 18 September	Closed INSET day	Closed INSET day
Saturday 19 September	Closed	Open 10am to 5pm
Monday 21 September	Open	Closed for deep clean

Remote Working

Thank you for all your support in assisting students working from home. In response to feedback we are trying to reduce the amount of printing that we expect to be done to complete tasks, we are trying to differentiate when work is set and submitted so students do not have sudden peaks in work. Staff have been asked to make sure tasks do not exceed an hour unless it is part of an ongoing project. I appreciate that there will be likely to be more work set than students could complete in the three hours that is recommended for study. Please do not despair, we would encourage students to do as much as they can within the timescales available, and not to worry if tasks are not finished. I would encourage students to undertake at least some tasks from each subject and not neglect any subject entirely.

Thank you for your continued support, if there is any more clarity regarding openings I shall forward the information. To reiterate, Year 10 and 12 parents will receive an email later this week regarding whether they wish to engage in face to face support.

Best wishes



David Collins
Headteacher