



THE KING'S SCHOOL

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23 October 2020

School update for all parents/carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. As the first half-term draws to a close, I wanted to provide you with an update of how things have been at The King's School since we welcomed our students back in September.

We all hoped by this point we would be operating in some kind of normality but unfortunately we continue to have to deal with the pressures of Covid-19. I know that this has had a significant impact in our community and I do not underestimate the challenges that our families currently face. That said, please accept my sincere thanks for working with us to ensure that students have returned to education and are again able to access their learning and the have the social interactions that are important for us all.

I hope you have found the communication from the school informative and timely and as you are aware, a great deal of planning went into ensuring we were ready in September. Great credit must go to all our students who have been excellent in working with us to make the reopening of school as seamless as it could be. They have settled well and despite things being different, have responded in an exemplary manner. I would also like to mention the staff who have made sure that all students have high quality lessons in challenging circumstances. I know from reading emails and having messages passed on to me that parents/carers are grateful for their work and commitment.

Catch-up

I know that many parents/carers will be concerned about how students will 'catch-up' from the work missed from March – July. We have a comprehensive plan in place for all students in all year groups which has started already. In many cases, curriculum has been adapted to ensure that key content from the previous year is recapped before moving on. We have invested a significant amount of time in the last 12 months to devising a new curriculum for Key Stage 3 and 4 and this has allowed us to be flexible in our approach. In addition, we have made sure that we have extra capacity to allow for more bespoke intervention for certain groups and this has been decided based on performance prior to lockdown and identifying those who were unable to engage fully during this time.

Assessments/Reporting to parents/carers

As part of the new curriculum design, we have incorporated weekly knowledge recall assessments in all subjects. This is allowing us to keep a weekly track on the key points students need to remember for each subject. This builds towards a 'Key Piece' that is completed once every half-term. This information, along with previous data is giving us a clearer picture as to the progress of all students and where intervention may be needed. As you will appreciate, this has been essential due to our most recent progress data being from January 2020, prior to lockdown. It is our intention to report progress to parents/carers after Christmas which will give us the next half-term to allow for further assessments and intervention to take place. It is crucial that we provide you with an accurate picture as opposed to rushing to communicate this kind of information. Our mid-year assessments for all year groups will provide more accuracy here and put us in a strong position to report progress that is useful for you and more importantly, as accurate as possible.

Year 11

The above is particularly true for Year 11. Year 11 mock exams are planned for November/December and reports will be with parents/carers soon after Christmas. As you would expect, the assessments will be able to focus on catch-up areas and allow us to further identify where intervention is needed. Achieve sessions have been compulsory since the start of the academic year and again, I commend students for their attendance. We have been running at over 98% attendance daily, which is fantastic. These sessions have focused on key catch-up areas, as well as incorporating the crucial exam skills they will need to be successful. This will continue after half-term, albeit with a change in the day for certain subjects so students can access as wide a range as possible. We also set up our form groups from September to be subject based so that students can spend 20 additional minutes daily with a subject specialist.

We will be starting working with our Year 11 students after half-term on making applications to post-16 providers. We will ensure that all applications are complete prior to Christmas and then predicted grades added after mock exams. It is crucial that we provide as much accuracy as possible so our students end up on the right courses next year.

Remote Learning

We have recently invested in webcams for every computer in every classroom in school. Our plan is to move to a system where all students who may have to self-isolate after half-term can access their live lesson as it happens in school. Whilst we have provided the resources for all lessons so far, we feel this is the most suitable way for all students to get the best experience possible. Please note that this does not mean that every lesson is streamed but only those where there is a member of that class who is unable to be in school. More details will follow after the break.

Extra-Curricular

PE lessons have been well received by our students and our hope is that we can extend our extra-curricular provision further in the coming weeks, in addition to more practical subjects. Of course, this is whilst operating within the national guidance.

Reporting cases of Covid-19

Unfortunately we have had cases this half-term and these have been communicated with you. I want to assure you that every time we have a case confirmed, we follow the procedure as outlined by the Government. Regrettably, some people, often not part of the school community, who are not aware of the processes take to social media with comments that are inaccurate and unhelpful. To be clear, the guidance change that states that close contacts are now identified as opposed to wider individuals is the reason we have dealt differently with cases as the term has progressed. Please be absolutely clear that the safety of our students and staff is paramount.

That said, again following guidance, we will not send letters to parents after half-term to communicate a case being confirmed but will do it through a message (SMS and through MCAS). This prevents you receiving the same letter repeatedly. We will also message parents and carers of those identified as close contacts (unless the guidance changes again).

As a school we would still need to know of any confirmed cases during the break. If this does occur, please contact us on admin@kings.patrust.org.uk so we can take any necessary steps to notify others.

Finally

A tough half-term but a successful one. As I stated before, I could not be prouder of the students and the staff and I thank you for your continued support and understanding during continued uncertainty.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Pinto', written in a cursive style.

Mr. D Pinto
Headteacher