

Update 9 22nd May

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, we would like to start by thanking you and your children for the amazing support you have shown to our community. The kind words via email, phone calls and social media has meant a lot to our staff during these challenging times. This has reaffirmed what we already know - we are incredibly fortunate to work alongside such a resilient, flexible and hardworking staff team.

Next, we would like to say congratulations to our students for the outstanding effort they have shown over the last 10 weeks in completing their schoolwork. We know it has been difficult for some children and we are aware that it has taken a while for all of us to get into a rhythm that works for us. Mental Health and Wellbeing remains our priority for students and staff and if your child is anxious about work or the current situation, please encourage them to contact their teachers or pastoral leaders. This week we have started to email students directly with wellbeing messages and videos from their pastoral leaders. Please ask your children about these.

We wrote to you on 19th May explaining the situation at the time regarding a potential expansion of provision for Year 10 and Year 12 students from 1st June.

Unfortunately, the government guidance on what is expected regarding Years 10 and 12 'face-to-face' experience has yet to be released, therefore we have ruled out any students in those year groups returning immediately after half-term.

We have consulted with other schools in Stevenage and across the county. Stevenage Headteachers, like the majority of all Hertfordshire Headteachers, have decided that we will not be inviting Year 10 and 12 groups back to school until the 8th June at the earliest. This will give us the necessary planning time once we have seen the official summary of expectations and heard from the government on the 28th May regarding their position on schools expanding their provision.

Every school has particular challenges to overcome before they can begin to welcome back students physically and the final arrangements made will look different in different contexts. Every school must make their sites as COVID secure and safe as possible. This will come down to the locality of students, designs of buildings and the size of some classrooms. Each school also has different numbers of staff available to come into school due to considerations such as shielding for them or their families, and this will impact on what each school can offer. As a result, we hope parents will understand that making comparisons between schools would not be appropriate.

We are continuously reviewing our plans with senior leaders and governors. Whilst the date has changed, our current expansion plans remain in place, but may need to evolve in the light of changing DfE guidance. Once we have finalised our plans, we will inform parents of Year 10 and 12 directly.

As a school, we will continue to be open for our key worker and vulnerable student provision during half term, including the Bank holiday. This provision will continue until the end of the academic year.

We have reached the end of the first half of the summer term and therefore no work will be set during the half term break. If anything changes with regards to schooling over the next week, we will be in contact.

Thank you again for your ongoing support, stay safe and well and enjoy the half term break.

Yours faithfully

Mr Fitzpatrick
Executive Headteacher

Mr Roberts
Head of School