

23rd June 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Re: update for Year 7, 8 and 9 students

Following the recent announcement by the Prime Minister it is confirmed that Year 7 to Year 9 students will not be returning to school, in any format, before the summer.

Firstly can I thank you for all your efforts in trying to ensure your children continue working at home. I can certainly relate to the difficulties you have faced with an 11 year old and a toddler myself at home. Trying to juggle home working and home learning has certainly been a big challenge for me!

Over the last couple of weeks our staff have undergone training to enhance our remote learning offer. From this week staff will be providing more live lessons to our students. This will be through the Microsoft Teams portal.

Microsoft Teams allows teachers to deliver live sessions in which they can use a computer desktop or PowerPoint presentation to explain the key content. When using this feature there is no expectation for teachers or students to appear on camera. Some people will not want to appear on screen. Teachers and students may just use the chat functionality and/or use the microphone. Other teachers and students may utilise all the functionality of Microsoft Teams.

Alongside Microsoft teams we will continue to use ClassCharts to share work which has been set, so please ensure that you have set up your access to this system too so you can see the work which has been set for your child. Please contact info@phoenix.sandwell.sch.uk if you are unable to access ClassCharts. ClassCharts will not just be used for providing work but as an additional method of communication with parents and carers.

Some departments will continue to use other platforms for learning e.g. Showbie and Edmodo – these will continue to run alongside Microsoft Teams and ClassCharts.

We anxiously await the big plans the government has for a return in September and as a school we are working hard to adapt to any plans which are shared. We are currently working a model where Year 10 and Year 12 students are placed in bubbles with 8 other students and a maximum of three staff, on rota. If the social distancing safety measure remains in place in September our maximum capacity for students at any time would still be significantly less than half the school population. However, we also have a number of staff who are unable to work in school for medical reasons or have family members at home who are shielding and this also will impact on the offer we provide to students.

Once we have some guidance and details for September I will happily share these with parents and carers, however, please be aware that as Head teachers we are only made aware of requirements at the same time as the public via the daily press conferences. We then receive more details by email in the days that follow the press releases.

Please keep pushing your child to complete the work which is being set by their teachers as it will ensure they do not fall behind others and it will also ensure they will be ready to learn once a firm date of return is known.

In line with government guidelines, we will be providing a progress report for students before the end of the term.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Smith
Head teacher

