



Hanham Matters

Weekly bulletin for Hanham Woods Academy

Week Beginning 6th January 2021

First, can I wish you all a Very Happy New Year. I hope you got something of a break over Christmas even if it was different to normal.

Whilst the COVID situation has always been concerning, the speed with which we have found ourselves in a third national lockdown may have come as a surprise and caused anxiety or stress at home. The school closures were probably inevitable but the speed with which examinations and tests have been cancelled for Key Stages 1 and 2, GCSE and A-Level will also have left some students feeling angry, confused, upset or demotivated. Whatever your child's response is, we are here to listen and to support. We will be contacting all families over the course of the next few weeks to undertake welfare checks but if you feel your child needs support now please contact Miss Wilshire or Mrs Smith.

Onsite Provision and Guidance

Whilst the media have been reporting on school closures, of course, we remain open to those students who have been identified as vulnerable or whose parents/carers are key workers. It is worth remembering that the government have placed the country into lockdown and we are being asked to 'stay at home, to protect the NHS and to save lives.' We are available if you need provision for your child, but given that the intention is to reduce transmission of the virus, we must ask that you only request a place in the Academy if there are no alternatives. For clarity, students who are in the Academy will be accessing their online learning in computer rooms and undertaking PE sessions.

Online Distance Learning

We are in a much stronger position to provide high quality distance learning in this lockdown than previously. Teachers have been trained on producing videos and resources, more families have devices at home to access online learning and we have developed quizzes/tests to check understanding. We are aware some students are just taking quizzes/tests without engaging with the video or resources – please do encourage your child to work through all the resources set by their teachers.

We have received some inquiries from students and parents/carers about 'live lessons'. Presenting lessons live with no ability to interact with students offers no additional benefits. The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) undertook research about online learning after the initial lockdown and found no evidence of improved learning or motivation. If teachers are providing all live lessons, they too will not be able to check in on students, make welfare calls and lead sessions for our vulnerable and key worker children. They may also be at home with their children and not available at the correct time. I can see benefits to small group sessions where there is interaction between students and the teacher (possibly via Microsoft Teams or Zoom) and we are piloting some of these approaches over the next week. I will feedback on this trial in subsequent newsletters.

Mass COVID-19 Testing

You will be aware that schools have been asked to establish mass COVID-19 testing centres. The tests used are the Lateral Flow Device test (LFD). This provides the result of your test in 30minutes. These centres were to be used to test all children on their return to the Academy after Christmas, to test staff on a weekly basis and to test close contacts of positive cases daily. We have set up our testing centre and will be testing all staff and students who are coming on-site this week. If your child is attending the Academy currently and you wish them to have a test you must complete the electronic consent form that has been sent to you. In places such as Liverpool this mass testing played a huge part in reducing community transmission and is part of our systems of control to ensure we keep all staff, students and their families as safe as possible.

We are currently working through our calendar to make decisions about what can continue and what needs to be re-arranged. The Year 9 Options process is something that cannot be moved and Mr O'Callaghan will be issuing a presentation next week to explain next steps in the process.

Finally, can I thank you all for your ongoing support during these unprecedented times. The messages of support really do give staff a lift so I am very grateful to those who have taken the time to send one in.

Take care and stay safe

Mr Kneller | Academy Principal