

11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Families,

**Re: COVID-19 Update, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020: Final decision on school reopening in the Summer Term**

Thank you very much to all year 10 families who completed the survey that was sent out so that we could see how many students would be coming into school if we were to open to year 10 from the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Using this information, we, along with the governing body and senior leaders of the school, have had extensive talks over the last week on whether Burton Borough School should open to year 10s on a rota.

**Our final decision is that Burton Borough School will not be open in the Summer term. Instead, online sessions with your child's usual classroom teacher will take place via Microsoft Teams on a regular basis. This will then be rolled out to the other year groups before the Summer holidays.**

**School will still remain open to keyworker and vulnerable students as we have been since the beginning of lockdown.**

**Rationale behind this decision**

- Approximately 60% of year 10 families said that they would send their children back to school. As a percentage of the whole school population, this is **only 11% of students who would receive face to face contact with their teachers.**
- We do not feel that it is right that only a small proportion of year 10 students should receive face to face contact when with Microsoft Teams, **there is the option of all students receiving face to face contact** albeit via an online platform.
- Taking into consideration the much smaller class sizes for year 10 if we reopen next week to them and the number of staff who would be unavailable because they are shielding or because of childcare issues, it would be **highly likely that students would not have their usual classroom teacher for each subject.**
- From the 15<sup>th</sup> June until the end of term, there is only 4 weeks. Having a new teacher for four hours (one hour per week for the core and extended core) is not enough for that teacher to get to know your child as well as their usual classroom teacher. In addition, there would not be sufficient quality time with option subjects and RE.
- **Teachers who are shielding or have childcare issues will still be able to deliver sessions on Teams**, therefore, your child will be receiving the expert teaching, advice and guidance from a member of staff they already know.
- **We feel that if we were to return now with the current R-rate and coronavirus situation, the focus of staff and students will be on social distancing and the anxieties associated with that and not on teaching and learning.**
- We feel that following lockdown with students being at home, the next logical step is for them to see and interact with their teachers and peers first before coming into the physical building. In terms of **mental health and wellbeing**, we did not feel that coming back to school at this stage, where there is now black and yellow tape across tables and a highly regimented system for hygiene and staff in PPE would be the best option for our students, **particularly those with SEND.**
- If we were to open to the small percentage of students from next week, it would mean staff would not be able to carry out Teams sessions with a wider group of students, including those in other year groups as there would not be the capacity.

- If we open school next week and use Teams, (a new system staff will be receiving training on over the next couple of days but will need time to ensure they are confident in its use), the focus would be too scattered and we could end up with two systems not working in the way that it should/could.
- **Families, students and staff who have used Teams over the last week have been extremely positive, saying that it has invigorated teaching and learning. Some students even asked for more than one session in a day because they were so keen to do more!**
- Small school teams can continue to focus their pastoral and safeguarding duties on working with vulnerable students and their families instead of the day to day issues that may arise if school was open to year 10.
- Finally, with the number of people on school site kept to an absolute minimum, the risk of virus transmission is also kept to an absolute minimum.

In conclusion, the school has not taken this decision lightly, but made it with safety, the quality of teaching and learning of all students and the impact of mental health and wellbeing at the forefront. Although we know that there may be some year 10 families who will be disappointed that their child will not be attending the physical school building from next week, we hope that you understand that we have come to our decision based on what would be right for the education of all our 1130 students.

#### Anticipated Timeline

- **11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June (and ongoing):** Staff to receive specific MS Teams training on how to use the system with students. This will also include online safety training.
- **W/B 15<sup>th</sup> June:** All staff who teach **year 10** to start inviting their classes to sessions. Those who were in the trial group to start using Teams with **year 9**.
- **W/B 22<sup>nd</sup> June:** Year 10 lessons to be set up on a regular basis with all staff who teach them. Staff to start using Teams with other year groups
- **W/B 29<sup>th</sup> June onwards:** Teams to be used with all year groups.

#### Preparation for Microsoft Teams Sessions

In preparation for all students to be ready, we attach the user guides on MS Teams from last week again. Please read these carefully and ask your child to install the app/be familiar with Office 365.

Thank you once again to all families for your patience in waiting for MS Teams to be set up and for our year 10 families in understanding why we are not opening the school from next week.

Yours sincerely,



Krissi Carter  
Principal



Paul Ackers  
Chair of Governors



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