



Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family safe and well and that you were able to enjoy, in some socially distanced way, the recent bank holiday celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. I do appreciate that this time has seen families experience challenges of a variety of types such as financial, anxiety over separation from family and friends and concerns for the education of children and the qualification process for Year 11 students. The purpose of this letter is for me to update you as best I can on the national picture for education, given the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May and the subsequent guidance released, as well as to update you on the steps we are taking as a school regarding the education of our students. I appreciate this is a lengthy communication, however I do feel that it is important to be as open and transparent as possible about the planning we are doing and the actions we are taking. I would also like to invite parents/carers and students to offer comments and questions for us to consider as we advance our planning process further and the mechanism for doing that is at the end of the letter.

### **Student Welfare and Safeguarding**

The current lockdown is having an impact on the mental health and welfare of our students as any period of enforced social distancing will do. We appreciate that very many students have ways to cope with this, however it is important that students continue to keep in contact with friends via online communication and have regular breaks during the day. In addition, the school have been making a significant number of welfare phone calls to students and parents and these will continue over the coming weeks. If you do have a safeguarding concern then please contact Miss Bate ([f.bate@hodgson.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:f.bate@hodgson.lancs.sch.uk)) and Mrs Fox ([s.fox@hodgson.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:s.fox@hodgson.lancs.sch.uk)).

### **Continuation of Home Learning**

Since the closure of the school to the vast majority of our students, we have been setting work using the various online platforms used in school and bringing this together using ClassCharts. We recognise that this system has some limitations, in particular the lack of personal (visual/audio) input from teachers. I see this as an area that, as far as we can, needs addressing and Mr Malone is working to prepare a suitable platform for this purpose. We will be in touch with more details on this as soon as we practically can.

### **Year 11 Students – GCSE Grades**

Staff are currently undertaking the task of establishing a 'Centre-Assessed Grade' for all GCSEs and other qualifications as well as a rank order within each grade. This is a large undertaking as we have over 1800 grades to establish. We have previously communicated with Year 11 parents/carers and students on this, and the guidance within those communications still applies, especially that staff are not permitted in any way to discuss the grading with parents or students. These grades, and the associated rank order, will then be standardised by the awarding bodies to produce the final grade. The awarding bodies will issue results to Year 11 students on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August and we will be in touch closer to the time to outline the process for this day.

### **Planning a Phased Re-Opening of School**

Whilst I, along with most others, hoped that the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May would provide some clarity regarding any plans for re-opening schools I was, at least from a secondary school perspective, disappointed that the broadcast did not appear to provide this. The government has since issued subsequent additional guidance that is clearer and Year 10 students have been prioritised for a return to school, in some form, to supplement their home learning before the summer holidays. The current provision for key workers' children as well as the most vulnerable will continue, under the same arrangements.



As a school, we have been working on a phased approach to re-opening the school which, given the greater recent clarity from the government, we are now in a position to make more concrete plans for. I must stress that, as the Prime Minister said, these plans are all conditional on the country making the appropriate progress towards lessening the presence and impact of COVID-19 in the country.

- **School Closure Phase**

This is the stage we are currently at. Alongside the very small and limited on-site provision we have, other essential site works are taking place ready for the phased re-opening of the school.

- **Year 10 – Partial Phase**

This is where we re-open on a partial/part-time basis to Year 10 students. This will coincide with ‘Part Two’ of the government’s recovery plan and it has been indicated that this will start on 1<sup>st</sup> June at the earliest. Given that we will return staff to the school prior to students, Year 10 students will not return before 3<sup>rd</sup> June and this will be on a part-time basis to limit the number of students in school. Once this date is confirmed we will communicate further. All other year groups will remain at home during this phase as is currently the case. The pastoral wellbeing of our students is paramount during this phase and the plan will reflect this.

- **All Year Groups – Partial Phase**

This is where we will have part of the school in on a rota basis, one or possibly two year groups at a time, with other time on home learning. My expectation is that this will last into, if not through, the autumn term. It may be that the scientific evidence suggests that schools are safe to return in full and this phase would not be required or may be very short, however I would be negligent if this was not to be included in the planning. The aim of doing this in this way is to have year groups return in full so as to get a learning and social routine in progress as quickly as possible. Given recent announcements, this will commence in September at the earliest.

- **Full Re-Opening**

This is where all students return to full-time education. This may not be until 2021, however we will follow scientific and government guidance.

For the school to return and restart, the Senior Leadership Team and I have been working on a number of strategies and systems for running a school under some form of social distancing guidelines. I accept that social distancing is very difficult in a school, however we must do our absolute best to follow the advice at the time as far as possible and to adjust our operation to promote the required distancing. For students, this will mean possibly returning to a school system that they will not recognise and will be required to comply with completely. This does concern me and therefore I would be grateful if you could find the time to discuss this letter with your child. Below are some strategies we are considering, in no particular order, which I offer to give you a flavour of type of measures being discussed for any initial opening.

- External visitors to school will not be allowed in school initially. Conversations with parents/carers will need to take place through either telephone, as the vast majority currently do, or via video conferencing.
- Movement around the building will be structured more heavily than currently. We will be considering one-way corridors, staggered breaks/lunches and using a reduced number of rooms for teaching. This is to reduce cross-contact of students. Please rest assured that these considerations are balanced against the social considerations of a return to school and that the school should, as far as possible, be a welcoming environment for students.
- The school calendar, certainly for the autumn term, will be looked at very carefully. Whilst we would very much like to welcome parents into school for information evenings, parents’ evenings, Open Evening etc., we do need to accept that these events may not happen as planned. We will consider virtual alternatives where possible.
- Student and staff dress will need to be sensibly and practically considered. It is highly unlikely that we will return with students wearing the standard school uniform. We will confirm details of the dress requirements prior to any re-opening.
- The return of staff and students will need to be managed carefully. I am currently working on a plan where staff will return first followed by students. This way, all necessary preparations can be completed to make the return of any students as smooth as possible. We also need to support students and staff during this transition.



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- School transport may not operate in the way it has in the past. We are in active dialogue with transport providers and assessing any government guidance. This will be confirmed in due course.

Some of the contents of this letter, especially in relation to the forms and timings of schools re-opening, are not final and are informed by the Senior Leadership Team's view of the system as it currently is. Further guidance to parents/carers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>. I have offered these Hodgson-specific details as an indication of the level of planning, including risk-assessment, that is going on within the school. **Before we proceed with any re-opening, I will write to the relevant parents and students again with further, more concrete, details.**

### **Comments and Questions from Parents/Carers and Students**

I appreciate that parents/carers and students will have comments that they wish us to take into consideration as we advance the planning process and questions that they may wish to ask. For this purpose there are two links in the covering email and ClassCharts notification for parents/carers and students to submit comments/questions. These links are separate for parents/carers and students so we can give consideration to their perspective as we read them. I will attempt to answer questions that are posed in my next communication; I would ask you to understand that there may be questions I do not know the answer to at this time, however I will do my best.

### **The School Day**

I have received a number of queries from parents/carers regarding the consultation regarding the change to the school day to accommodate a reading period that make the issue worth including in a wider communication. Thank you to those who responded to the consultation. The vast majority of comments were receptive and positive. Some concern was expressed about the change to the end time of the day and the implications for transport home. A couple of questions related to the current ERIC time and I can confirm that this will be discontinued. We have revised the model, taking into account the concerns expressed, that allows for the current finish time of 2:50pm to be maintained as well as allowing for some transition time between lessons. I will confirm final details shortly, however the school day will not change until we have a full return to school.

In closing, I would like to publicly thank all staff who have worked extremely hard to support remote learning, on-site provision and site preparation and maintenance as without their work the provision we have been able to maintain would not have been possible. I would also like to express my thanks to parents/carers for their supportive message throughout a difficult time and to students for the way in which they have adjusted to this 'new normal'. I am extremely grateful for the support offered, which is humbling, and would like to leave you assured that my principal priority in whatever the immediate future brings is the health and safety of all of our school community.

Take care.

Yours faithfully

I. Siddall  
Headteacher



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