



**BIDDULPH
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Headteacher: **Mrs E C Robinson BA(Hons)**



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Chief Executive Officer: **Mark Kent**

12th February 2021

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE PERSON WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Re: Headteacher's Update

It has certainly been a strange and challenging start to 2021 and it is hard to believe that a whole half-term has passed, meaning that we are now halfway through our academic year. A lot of work has been going on in the background to ensure that we continue to provide the highest quality remote learning and begin to plan for the future of our school.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a few of the things that have been happening in school and try to provide some reassurance about the possible return to school for students.

We have had around 60 students in the school building over this lockdown period. These students have been involved in weekly testing, as have the staff who are regularly in school. We have continued to provide a mixed remote provision package for all our students which combines live lessons with assignments and recorded presentations.

Thank you to all of you who responded to our parent survey. It helped to inform our practice and hopefully improve our offer. I know how difficult remote learning can be for students, parents, and staff. Although our children are more independent at this age, it is harder to support their learning and it is often easier for them to pull the wool over our eyes! However, most of our students have been working really hard and some have even said that they prefer remote learning! Please know that we are only ever at the end of an email or telephone if you need us. We are here to support you and your child in whatever ways we can, even if it is just to chat.

The leadership groups within school have been working with me to provide a clear insight into the life of the school. We have begun to look at how we want to move the school forward and I am looking forward to sharing this with you in the coming months. We have revisited our vision and values, clarified roles and responsibilities within school and have started our improvement planning.

We have tried to keep aspects of our school life going, despite the lockdown. Mrs Swift's 'Miles and Miles' has seen us competing against Westwood College and the Sixth Form College and I look forward to seeing the results for this. Ms Goodwin is running our 'Into the Future' week virtually and has been able to source a range of opportunities for students. Our baking competition during 'Lean Screen Friday' produced some amazing cakes and our social media platforms have enabled us to share the good work being done by many of our students.

We have successfully run our Y9 Progress and Options week. These are not always easy things to do remotely but we are responding to your questions and issues as quickly as we can. We will also be releasing additional grade sheets for Years 10 and 11 to report on student engagement. Parents of Sixth Form students will be receiving grade sheets shortly.



After half-term we will be having an INSET day on Monday 22nd February. This is calendared and will be used to further train and support staff in their delivery of remote learning and discuss preparations for the possible return of students to the building after 8th March. There will be no lessons on this day.

We are anticipating a government announcement on 22nd February which will outline the potential return to school for students and the proposals for examinations. I cannot speculate on what they will decide, but I can reassure you that we will be ready to safely take students back into the building when we are told to do so. We have a fully trained team of testers, who will have been vaccinated by this point, ready to support the mass testing of students and staff. In order to do this safely and with minimum disruption we are likely to stagger the return of students. We will send out the information for this as soon as we have been told that we can do so. It is important that students are tested regularly in line with government guidance. Thank you to all those parents/carers who have already given consent for their child to be tested ready for school to fully open. If you have not yet done so, please log into ParentPay and follow the instructions: "Consent to LFT testing".

There has been a lot of speculation in the press about the ways in which students will be able to 'catch-up' on missed learning. Firstly, I would like to completely reassure you that if your child has been fully engaged in lessons and tasks, they will not have 'missed' any learning. For those who have not been able to fully engage, we will be looking at a programme of support to help them to catch up. We will be engaging with parents and carers about this on an individual case basis. In my opinion, there has not been a 'catastrophic' loss of learning. Most of our students have worked incredibly hard to keep up with their learning and it is more about making sure that they are safe, happy, and able to access the next step to their learning.

It has certainly not been the start that I expected in my new role. It has, however, been a very productive half-term. I have been incredibly touched by the warmth and care that exists within the school, and our wider community, and I know how hard everybody here is working to provide the best possible education for your child. I look forward to being able to meet your child in person and to the exciting possibilities that lie ahead of us as a school.

Please take good care over the half-term break.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs E C Robinson
Headteacher