



Waddesdon C of E School | Coronavirus Newsletter 10 – 1/06/2020

“Now, what I want is, Facts.” Thomas Gradgrind

The assertion above, although attributed to Thomas Gradgrind, is in fact the invention of Charles Dickens as you may already know. His novel *Hard Times* starts with this claim that facts above everything else are what we need in life.

Although Dickens challenges this assertion, in relation to our current situation and the on-going discussions regarding school re-opening, it would seem that a few more facts and clearer information are, in actual fact, the one thing needful at present.

With this in mind, I devote the vast majority of this newsletter to the information that schools have been given over the past week and also additional advice I have received based on the Government’s announcements. In addition, I’ve included the steps towards re-opening and the progress being made towards that goal.

However, as Dickens warns, we also have to be careful of “facts”.

At a time when “the science” is untested and “the facts” unproven, it remains my strong belief that we should continue to be guided by our shared values and, in particular, openness, collaboration, equity and consideration of individual circumstances. We proceed with our values to the fore, and our concern for our students’ and staff’s safety at the heart of any steps that we take.

I continue to acknowledge the difficulties and challenges that remote-schooling has on your home life. If you need to contact one of our staff, please do so – we are in this together.

Mr Abbott





On Bank Holiday Monday, the government published guidance for [Secondary Schools](#) on wider opening, expanding on the points made by the Prime Minister the previous day.

Key points from the secondary guidance are as follows:

- Secondary schools should plan on the basis that **from the week commencing 15 June**, they can invite Year 10 and 12 pupils back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, subject to the government's 5 tests being met:
 - Making sure the NHS can cope
 - A 'sustained and consistent' fall in the daily death rate
 - Rate of infection decreasing to 'manageable levels'
 - Ensuring supply of tests and PPE can meet future demand
 - Being confident any adjustments would not risk a second peak

In his announcement on 28th May, the Prime Minister announced that these 5 tests had been met.

- Secondary schools should offer this face-to-face support **to supplement** the remote education of Year 10 and Year 12 pupils, which **should remain the predominant mode of education** during this term for pupils in these year groups.
- Schools are able to have **a quarter** of the Year 10 and Year 12 cohort in school at any one time.
- Any plans that secondary schools have made for pupils to return earlier in June should be amended to commence from 15 June.
- **Vulnerable children and children of critical workers** in other year groups should be accommodated as currently.

The following suggestions were provided regarding safety and reduction of transmission risk:

- Secondary schools should aim to practise social distancing in line with the measures the government is asking everyone to adopt in public and in workplaces, including keeping pupils 2 metres apart from each other where possible.
- Ensuring sufficient distance between pupils is likely to mean classes are no more than half their usual size.
- Mixing between different groups of pupils should be kept to a minimum.
- Where rotas are used, secondary schools should avoid split day rotas within the same day and ensure that only a quarter of children are ever in the school on any one day. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in all year groups should still be encouraged to attend full-time.
- Within the guidance above, schools have the flexibility to implement face-to-face support for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils in the way that best suits their circumstances.

In summary, the guidance indicates that home education will be the main means of education delivery in the short term, supplemented by some form of face-to-face support for students in Years 10 and 12.

I support this emphasis in the Summer Term on the important examination years, as well as the acknowledgement that schools should focus their attention and available resources on the most vulnerable, as well as those children whose parents are key workers.



Next Steps

Having completed our Risk Assessment over the half term break, the next step is to share it with Governors and Staff. Once this part of the process is complete, we will send it to you for your comments and feedback. In the meantime, we will model how we might provide face-to-face support for Year 10 and Year 12 on the basis of the risk assessment.

Homelearning, via Show My Homework, continues as before.

Parental consultation

As outlined in the last newsletter, I have divided our consultation with you into three phases: identifying concerns and questions; publishing the risk assessment; and finally ascertaining which students are able to return to school.

Phase 1

Parents who conveyed their concerns and questions raised questions about:

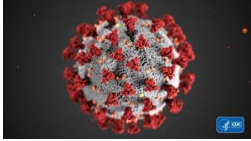
- Students who are unable to come into school, whatever form of re-opening we are able to adopt;
- The long-term impact of missing teaching in school (particularly for examination groups) and plans to provide supplementary support;
- Information regarding progress and progression into Sixth Form;
- Motivation at home without school routines to provide support and structure;
- The social and developmental disadvantages from being separated from friends.

It is clear from the available information that we will need to continue to operate a 'dual economy' with regard to the students' education. The longer term planning for September will require us to put in place the means whereby students who are unable to attend school receive a similar education to those who can attend.

It is possible that the staff will split into three groups: those who can attend each day, those who can attend according to their own childcare needs and those who will need to remain at home due to shielding. Teachers will teach from either home or at school, accordingly.

The curriculum and timetable will be adjusted to provide for this new circumstance and measures used to check and consolidate students' understanding.

Progress reporting will be a feature of home-school communication. By alternating which students are in school, we hope to be able to provide the socio-emotional support that the students need, as well as a sense of community. The Enrichment Team (LSAs, led by Mrs Champness and Mr Sturla) continue to give individual feedback and support. Our Heads of Year are also providing additional help to any parents who require more personalised information, including motivation, and subject support.



Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)

Published on 22nd May, SAGE produced a set of papers which detailed the evidence and modelling behind the decision to open schools and colleges more widely. Below is a summary from the Association for School and College Leaders (ASCL) which provides insight into the decision taken by the Government.

“It is clear that there is no obvious answer to how and when schools should open more widely, and that the scientific evidence just isn’t there to indicate one clear ‘right’ approach. A sensible view, therefore, is that we need to proceed with extreme caution; ensure we have an effective test, track and trace system in place; allow schools and colleges to take their time to prepare as best they can; bring children back slowly and gradually; monitor the impact of this closely; and be prepared to change our approach if necessary.”



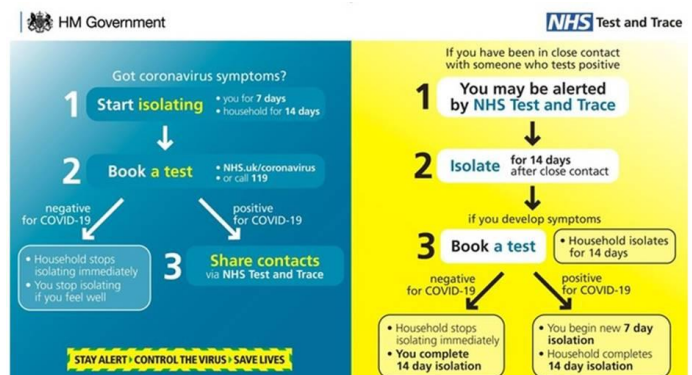
Association
of School and
College Leaders

ASCL summarises the key points as follows:

- There are varying degrees of confidence in what we know about the way in which children catch and spread Covid-19. The evidence seems to be strong that, if children catch the virus, they’re usually less severely affected than adults. It is mixed in terms of whether children are as likely to become infected in the first place. It is inconclusive in terms of whether they transmit the virus to the same extent as adults.
- It is clear that decisions about when and how to open schools to more pupils need to be mindful not only of how this might directly increase the R rate, but also of more indirect effects. For example, if people see children going back to school, that might give the impression that the virus is more under control than it really is, and so lead them to relax their own behaviours. This could have as much, if not more, impact on R than any spread directly related to schools opening. But this is very difficult to model.
- The evidence suggests that bringing back younger children is less risky than older ones. This is less to do with their inherent susceptibility to the virus, and more to do with the extent to which they mix outside the classroom.
- Educationally, though, younger children are less impacted by schools being closed than older children.

Launch of Test and Trace service

The new NHS Test and Trace service was [launched on](#) 27th May. Anyone who tests positive for Coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.



Waddesdon Bakes

This week's challenge was an Italian themed one. Tempted to get involved...?

<https://www.waddesdoncooks.co.uk/446056502>



A Message from Phil, our Chaplain

Join me on Thursday 4th June at 10am - <https://www.facebook.com/broughtoncommunitychurch/>

I'm going to be thinking for a very short time about blessing. Please search for 'UK Blessing' on Youtube or use this URL:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U&t=296s>

If you would like to join me in sharing bread and wine then please have a small piece of bread or cracker and some juice.



"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits together that overwhelm the world." – Desmond Tutu



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