



15th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

As school leaders, we waited for the announcement from central Government on Sunday 10th May before we felt we were in a position to update parents and children on our plans for any potential reopening of the school. The Government messaging on Sunday within the address for secondary schools was as follows:

“Secondary schools and further education colleges are likely to stay closed until September - apart from pupils with exams next year, who will get more help in addition to their current online lessons”.

Schools and colleges are told to "prepare to begin some face-to-face contact with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year".

The Department for Education will "develop further detail and guidance on how schools should facilitate this", the government says.

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-52618187>

However, on Monday all schools received an update from the Department for Education (DfE) which states the following for secondary schools:

“From 1st June 2020, we expect that secondary schools and colleges will be able to offer some face to face contact with year 10 and year 12 pupils. This will not be a return to full timetables or pupils back in school or college full time, rather some support to supplement pupils’ remote education. In line with implementing protective measures and reducing contacts, schools and colleges should limit the attendance of the year 10 and 12 cohort in the setting at any one time and to keep students in small groups as [set out in our guidance](#). We will be consulting with sector representatives over the coming week in order to develop some suggested models to demonstrate how this could operate, which will be published along with further guidance for secondary schools in the coming weeks”.

I would like to stress to parents new information from the DfE is being received by schools daily and we are adjusting our plans based on the guidance. We feel it will not be until the Government reviews the 5 measures on the 28th May that we will know what the exact date and plans are for schools, but as a school we are planning for different scenarios.

In my letter 4, dated 24th April, I introduced stage 4 of our plan which would be the phased re-opening of schools. We now work towards partially opening our doors to students in **Year 10 and 12**. Given the physical constraints of our classrooms, class sizes are likely to be around 8 students in a normal classroom and 12 in a larger science room. We will have to introduce a new clear one-way system within the school and in most cases, staff will rotate not students. More details on this will follow and training for students and staff will be needed before the opening of the school.

Please do not contact the school as all communication around this process will come through letter format first with documents for students to read and visualise the way they are going to have to enter the buildings and grounds to follow. We will be sending out a survey next week to Year 10 and 12 parents to complete on any partial reopening and your thoughts on it.

I would like to reassure you at this stage that a lot of planning has already been done and that whatever we are asked to do, we will manage to a very high standard and only introduce this when we can safely do so with all the necessary training, technology and equipment. I have had approval from our Governors to release an additional £10,000 from our capital reserves to ensure we are well equipped and ready for any reopening which will ensure students, parents and staff feel safe and secure in the school environment.

I understand there will be great anxiety about returning to the school and as soon as we know the precise details around the Government plan, which will be supported by the science, we will share how our planning will also support this. So what can parents do to prepare these year groups? Talk to your child about going back to a school setting and the importance of social distancing, make sure they are well equipped as students must maintain social distancing and being well prepared will help this, please use our equipment list as this is what is needed each day

<https://www.kls.herts.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/Equipment-List-1.pdf>. Ensure they have a rucksack style bag as a handbag or over the shoulder style bag will not allow us to have a system which flows easily whilst maintaining social distancing within our corridors. If parents need support with these please contact your Head of Year. Finally, think about transport to and from school, and if cycling students must wear a helmet, more on this when we publish our plans.

We want to be able to offer parents a safe environment for students and staff to return to and build over time as confidence improves in our students and staff. Each week we will review and not increase numbers unless we are absolutely confident that we can safely.

Virtual Learning Updates:

As stated in letter 5, dated 1st May, when we first heard of potential closures then the subsequent closure of schools, we saw this as a marathon and not a sprint. The marathon continues but as we progress through this we are building and not fading in our approach to support young people and their families. This week has seen over 90+ virtual lessons and tutorials take place via Zoom and over 100 lessons next week. I see the following/subscriptions to our Maths team YouTube Channels now growing with a number of students outside of Kings Langley School now following the channels to support their learning. Here are two examples for parents to see. The team post the links via SMHW and support via the chat function or recorded Zoom lessons and Maths Watch work is set via SMHW.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNyhAww4QwA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vINNDmSlkMc>

Student feedback on this method is extremely positive:

“Hi Sir, hope you're well. Just to let you know that the video's you're making where you go through the examples are really helping, I'm finding the exercises easier and more enjoyable. Going to give the mini test a go tomorrow and see how that goes. Thanks, stay safe”

Teachers continue to vary the diet for students using a variety of means such as online learning platforms. It is clear from feedback the students really appreciate the new Zoom and Loom lessons or tutorials especially in the upper year groups. It is also fair to say some students in year 7 are struggling to adjust to Zoom and we have adjusted our approach to these year groups following feedback from parents and staff to limit some of the options available that could be a distraction to younger year groups along with recording more lessons so they can be watched later if needed. Student feedback on Loom and the other platforms are extremely pleasing. Parents not familiar with Loom please see the example below from Mr McGuigan. He has now published a number of these along with other subject areas and I would advise parents to watch one as the quality is exceptionally high:

Lockdown Lesson 2 Macbeth: Religion, Superstition and the Supernatural

<https://www.loom.com/share/ef6f824c1afb4929b271f7788ffe8e5e>

To support Key Stage 3 students we published help guides on Zoom and Show My Homework via the notices function on the platform to help with this transition.

The research is clear build up provision and not down, have a varied diet of different resources that build with your provision and finally give options to families and your staff to accommodate individual circumstances.

This week is our first week of virtual clubs being introduced as part of a virtual enrichment programme. We had the debate society taking place on Monday and EPQ on Tuesday.

Once again, I would like to thank our amazing staff for the work they are doing in planning and delivering the curriculum to our students in a variety of mediums. We estimate that it takes teachers about three times as long to prepare a 1 hour virtual lesson, as it would to prepare their normal lessons in school. This is partly due to weaving more new technology into the delivery, but also thinking carefully about the structure and sequencing of learning activities when being undertaken from a distance and in isolation. Our job is to try to minimize the impact of not being in the physical classroom and I hope that the sophistication and ingenuity in lesson planning is something that students have noticed.

Supporting Families in Need:

We know the national lockdown has left few businesses unscathed and, sadly, some of our families will inevitably have found their personal circumstances changing. If you are in this situation, your children may be eligible for free school meals now. There are further details on eligibility and how you can apply on the Hertfordshire County Council website. This can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/free-school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx>

Please contact the school if you would like support with your application or if you are currently in receipt of free school meals and are experiencing difficulties accessing the voucher system. Once you have completed the form the school is automatically updated and we have had our first few new families receiving additional support this week and if needed we will support more families.

Year 11 Sixth Form Bridging Work:

Year 11 students have experienced an unprecedented end to their time at the school. We hope, however, that for many this is not the end of their educational journey with us. We are looking forwards to welcoming them back into the Sixth Form later this year and to prepare them for this, we have asked the A Level Subject teams to produce earlier and extended 'Bridging Work' for them. We know that the transition from GCSE to A Level can be a challenging one and that the larger amount of independent study required for each subject can be demanding. To help equip them for this and to give them a flavour of what A Level work is like, we ask that all sixth form applicants complete the bridging work in the subjects they are thinking of studying. This might just be for the subjects they have chosen on their application forms or they can look at other subjects too, if they are thinking of changing their options. The bridging work needs to be completed by the start of their courses in September.

Please follow the link to take you to the bridging work: <https://www.kls.herts.sch.uk/sixth-form/bridging-work/>

If you have any questions or need any help or support, please email 6form@kls.herts.sch.uk

Parent comments and praise please keep them coming in via Admin@

"I just wanted to say THANK YOU for continuing to support the Students (& Parents) with your Newsletters, always full of useful tips and advice to keep active and create interest during the lockdown. It's much appreciated and thank you for continuing to work during these very strange times. very best wishes and please stay safe"

"I just wanted to say a Big Thank You to all of you at school who have gone the extra mile for both my children. Mr Shepherd phoned me and had a lovely chat about how xxxx was doing and not only that but how we as a family were. What was lovely is that he chatted for a few minutes and didn't rush off, so it was a genuine call and not just an obligation. Then Mrs Bloomfield phoned and had a nice chat with xxxx checking she was ok. The admin staff have also been amazing answering questions very quickly, extremely politely and professionally, bearing in mind the stress you all must be under. The weekly information that is being sent is very much appreciated.

Also the zoom lessons that are being organised have worked very well and xxxxx is grateful that he is able to continue with his studies".

"Thank you for being amazing"

"I love my daughter's teachers. She was fretting last night about forgetting to submit some homework on time... #StayAtHomeSaveLives"

<https://twitter.com/TVRav/status/1255121729636220933>

"I have seen from the news letters how much hard work you and your team have been putting into making scrubs for the NHS and wanted to congratulate you on such a great success.

We continue to love positive feedback from parents and students as it really keeps the staff motivated during these difficult times. If you can continue to send these to admin@KLS.herts.sch.uk.

Thank a Teacher Day: Wednesday 20th May 2020

If you have a STAR teacher or support staff member whom you'd like to say thank you to, you can do so before the National Thank a Teacher Day on Weds 20th May. They are looking for as many stories and creative ways of saying thank you, so you could send a picture or a video anything you think will catch their attention. Videos should be around 30 seconds, in portrait, include the name of who you are thanking at Kings Langley School and why. Entries should be either tagged on Twitter @UKThankATeacher or emailed to info@teachingawards.com using the hashtag #ThankATeacher. More details can be found at <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher-day/> where it you can also send a free ecard to a teacher of your choice. We would love to hear about your entries!

Online Safety Training

I would like to thank so many families for completing the Online Safety training that as a school we have provided at our cost to parents and families. As previously advised with our students now at home and using the internet to access their learning, we would like to offer some support to help parents and carers keep their children safe online.

This course is designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of online safety and by the end of the course you will have a good understanding of some of the risks and issues of using the internet and digital technologies.

You will learn steps that you can take to protect your children, and where to go for help if you need it. There will also be information on what you should be reporting and to whom.

The content intersects with the aims of several areas of legislation and guidance, such as The Children Act (1989), The Prevent Duty (2015), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and other key statutory and non-statutory regulation and support.

The course should take around an hour to complete but can be stopped and restarted at any point. Course notes and resources will remain available to you for the duration of your certification which is two years.

If you would like to complete this course, please follow the link below by typing it into your browser.

<https://www.childprotectioncompany.com/CPC/L/31F3504C4E>

If you do experience any difficulties signing up for the course please feel free to contact Fiona Winfield (Principal Deputy) via the school admin address at admin@kls.herts.sch.uk

Supporting Children's Safety online

BBC Own It App has recently been updated for COVID-19. The BBC's Own It App helps young people new to social media manage their wellbeing, whilst empowering children to make smart choices, and helping them to lead a positive life online.

The Own It app and keyboard lets children:

- get advice whenever they type
- track their feelings
- win badges as they reflect
- find help when they need it
- taking quizzes to learn more about themselves

The app also includes a special keyboard to use which offers helpful tips and friendly advice to children when they need it. The app can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play. Further information can be found here: <https://www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control/own-it-app>

Students given the chance to join cyber security school

Thousands of young people are being offered the chance to join a virtual cyber security school as part of plans to make sure the country develops the next generation of professional cyber defenders.

At a time when schools remain closed to most children, the online initiative aims to inspire future talent to work in the cyber security sector and give students a variety of extracurricular activities to do from the safety of their homes.

Teens can learn how to crack codes, fix security flaws and dissect criminals' digital trails while progressing through the game as a cyber-agent. This will help them develop important skills needed for future jobs, particularly in cyber security.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-virtual-cyber-school-gives-teens-chance-to-try-out-as-cyber-security-agents-from-home>

Supporting Home Learning

There is a significant amount of research to show that parental engagement with learning at home is an important part of young people's educational journeys. That said, it can cause parents or carers anxiety. We hope that you find the below tips useful in helping to support your young person's self- confidence whilst still maintaining a value on learning:

- Keep the conversations about learning going. Perhaps near bedtime have a family round robin, where everyone says three things they've learned that day (these don't all have to be about 'school' subjects). This also shows that adults are still learning.
- Parents often feel that they can't support the learning of older children because the children are learning things they didn't learn, or learning in unfamiliar ways. It's not important that parents know the answers; it's fine to say, 'I don't know – how can we find out?'
- If your child is working on something that's new to you, ask them to explain it. This not only helps the child's self-confidence, it helps to embed the learning.
- Try to be as positive as possible about learning at home. You don't need to recreate a classroom at home – classrooms are set up the way they are because they serve to support the learning of a whole group of children.
- Children and young people are adaptable, but they are likely to take time to adapt. They may also be frightened and not understand why all the changes are taking place. It's far more important that your children feel supported rather than finishing every worksheet.

If you are interested in more guidance or the research that sits behind it, please see links below <https://my.chartered.college/2020/03/supporting-the-home-learning-environment/> https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid19_Resources/Resources_for_parents/Summary_of_Resources_-_Parents.pdf

Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer

The Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer Team has created a brand new resource area. Their blog outlines more detail and explains what it can do for families who have a child with SEND in Hertfordshire. The blog contains really useful information and ideas and can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/feedback/local-offer-blog/resource-s-area-goes-live.aspx>

Once again, I congratulate families for navigating the challenges this virus has thrust on us all. What is clear, as a community we will be stronger from the challenge and we look forward to being able to see children through our gates again, but only when it is safe to do so.

Yours sincerely

Mr D. Fisher
Headteacher