



The Crossley Heath School

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3th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we are now in the fifth week of the lockdown, I thought it would be helpful to give you some updates.

Firstly, I want to thank you all for the support you are providing to your children during this difficult period. I am sure we were all very disappointed to hear from Boris Johnson last week that schools will not re-open fully after February half-term as originally expected. Indeed, the position remains uncertain going into March as we await the Government's plans for re-opening. The most recent schools update from the Government says:

[the Government] "hopes it will be safe to commence the reopening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity. Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks' notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.Education attendance restrictions are to be reviewed again in mid-February when the Government will look at when more pupils and students can be brought back into schools and further education". (DfE Guidance to Schools 28 January).

Remote learning

Senior leaders and governors are continually monitoring the nature and quality of remote learning for all students. Recent feedback from a sample of students has been positive and we are very pleased that the vast majority of students are engaging well.

As of last Friday, students had completed four weeks of remote learning. In order to give them an opportunity to consolidate and, if needed, to catch up on learning, we have asked teachers not to set homework for Y7 or Y8 this week (w/c 01/02/21) and not to set any homework (except NEA work) for Y9-11 next week (w/c 08/02/21).

Whilst we have a good picture of remote learning from the monitoring and questionnaires done so far, we will shortly send out a further comprehensive survey for all students and a similar survey for parents. I would be grateful if you would look out for these and respond. These surveys are very helpful to us in monitoring the quality and consistency of work and student workload. They are invaluable in helping us to understand and support individuals or groups with work or technical issues, and to tailor our well-being and pastoral support.

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We continue to follow the DfE guidelines for schools in relation to the nature of remote learning which should be a blend of some 'live' teaching and some independent work away from the computer screen. 'Live' learning may be question and answer, or pre-recorded material, as well as the teacher talking live on screen. It is not our intention to deliver 5 hours 'on screen' live lessons every day. This is not appropriate and is detrimental to the health and well-being of children. We aim to provide a range of activities for students including research, demonstrations, written and practical tasks and opportunities to ask questions using the text box on TEAMS. This variety develops independent thinking skills, encourages students to take some responsibility for their learning, and is inclusive for all. Following the surveys, we will review our provision to ensure we have the right balance for your child, depending on their stage of education. Please note, however, that even where not delivering a 'live' lesson, teachers are often still online to answer questions.

I would like to thank the very many parents who have contacted us to compliment our provision, to offer support and to make helpful suggestions. We are 'in this together', to borrow a phrase, and we are delighted to be able to work with you to make the best of this difficult situation for all our children.

February half-term

Please note that school will be fully closed for the half-term break, including to children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. Parents of children who have been attending the 'mini-school' this half term will receive information in due course about how to inform school if their child tests positive for Covid-19 during half term.

Summer examinations

The Ofqual consultation closed to feedback on Friday, and various bodies and institutions (including the school) have submitted responses to their draft proposals. Ofqual will currently be considering these and will issue further guidance in due course, but we do not envisage this happening before the half term break. When Ofqual's guidance is published, I would ask parents of Y11 and Y13 students to be patient. We will need to digest what Ofqual says and plan for implementation. Accordingly, we will not be able to respond to queries or questions for some time. We will, of course, update you with definitive information as soon as we are able.

Y11 and Y13 parents should note that until the process by which grades will be awarded has been confirmed, and Ofqual's restrictions on sharing information are clarified, it would be inappropriate for teachers to make predictions about future outcomes. Teachers will be able to talk to you about your child's strengths in their subject and areas to focus upon, together with their suitability for A-level study in the subject (Y11) or preparation for progression (Y13).

Y11 & 13 Mock Examinations

It is still the school's intention to run mocks for Y11 and Y13 students, if it is decided that such exams form part of the Ofqual process for GCSE and A level grading. However, the exact nature and timing of these are dependent on both the return to school date and decisions taken by Ofqual. It is our view that any revision which students did for mocks as originally planned will stand them in good stead, but their current focus should be on completing their courses and engaging with their remote learning. We will of course keep you informed as further information becomes available.

Parents' Evenings

We are delighted to have been able to run a successful remote Y10 parents evening last week and to have arranged one for Y11 today and for Y13 next week. We are working with a company providing a cloud-based online system which, despite some initial technical issues, now seems to work well. Feedback from Y10 parents was overwhelmingly positive and we are intending to provide parents' evenings in this way, as calendared, for all year groups. I hope this will reassure you that you will have the opportunity, at some point, to have direct contact with your child's teachers.

Covid-19 testing

We have had no positive cases of Covid amongst staff or students attending the 'mini-school' since term started.

We are currently offering Covid-19 tests to staff who are regularly in school and to students attending the 'mini-school'. We have decided to use a local Calderdale Public Health scheme which differs slightly from the much publicised, now 'paused' national programme. The local scheme is more user friendly and enables us to continue to report positive cases to Calderdale. You may be aware that under Calderdale's guidance, local schools were able to contact trace students in a more refined way than in other parts of the country i.e., we were not required to send whole year groups home when a positive case was identified. Accordingly, we have confidence in Calderdale Public Health and have direct access to their good, local advice. It is for this reason, and because the situation is now changed since Christmas, that we have not contacted parents generally about consent for mass testing. Indeed, it remains to be seen if the government continues to promote mass testing when schools eventually re-open.

I do appreciate that this has been a long read but hope you have found the update helpful. Thank you all, once again, for the amazing work you are doing in supporting your child at this very challenging time. It is difficult to keep in good spirits at all times and people seem to be saying that this lockdown is tougher than the first. Winter weather and dark mornings/evenings don't help of course. You can find information about well-being support for your family on our website and, if you have specific concerns, our pastoral team are here if you need them.

Yours sincerely



Lynnette Cassidy
Headteacher