

# Formby High School

'Determined to Achieve'

DMA/LFO

19 June 2020

Dear Parents

I hope this letter finds you well.

Since my last letter to all parents before the Easter holiday, the Covid-19 situation has continued to evolve and we are now entering a period of easing of lockdown restrictions with cautious optimism. Whilst, frustratingly, this does not allow for all students to have the opportunity to come back into school before summer, it will hopefully provide some small steps towards a 'new normal' and for opportunities to meet with more family members (outdoors of course) and establish a household 'bubble'.

The school has been working very hard to prepare for the partial reopening for Year 10 and Year 12 who will return in small groups from Monday 22 June. In addition, we continue to provide for up to 40 students each day through our Open School for the children of critical workers. Preparing for wider opening from 22 June has involved an in-depth assessment of the various risk areas and the development of a comprehensive action plan to manage and mitigate them so that we can keep our staff and students safe. A copy of the risk assessment and action plan is available on the school website should you wish to read it. We will continue to review, update and act upon this as we move towards September.

Whilst I cannot provide a concrete plan for September until more government guidance is received, I can assure you that our overriding wish is to get students back in the classroom as quickly and safely as possible. I will continue to keep you posted on our plans for the new school year.

Until then, there is still much to do and still much taking place.

## Remote Classroom

Remote Classroom continues to be the primary source of academic support and challenge and we thank you for engaging so positively with it. The end of the school year is less than five weeks away and teachers in some subjects will use Remote Classroom activities (as well as the face to face tutorials with Year 10 and 12 students) to assess the progress that students have made and begin to identify where there may be gaps in knowledge and understanding. This will help with planning what to teach in the new school year. We are very aware that students have had a prolonged period of absence from school and, despite everybody's best efforts, they will not have learned the content delivered in their different subjects as well as if they had been in school. This is not a criticism, just the reality. To allow for teachers to plan for the new school year, they will not set work for students to complete through Remote Classroom on Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 July. This will allow them time to work within subject departments to plan for a range of scenarios for the new school year, ensuring that we hit the ground running in September.



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## Public Examinations 2021

I know Year 10 and 12 students and their families will be concerned about GCSE and A Level examinations next summer. Given the amount of teaching time missed, it is highly unlikely that examinations will return to normal. The lack of information from the Government regarding this has been a source of frustration. Whilst nothing is confirmed, there is, though, increased chatter amongst education commentators that next summer will see students' grades determined by a combination of examination and teacher assessment. However this unfolds, we will plan to give our students the best opportunity to achieve the grades they deserve and I will keep you updated on any further developments.

## Year 9 Discovery Year

Our newly developed 'discovery' curriculum for Year 9 will be launched as planned from September. With the exception of a very small number of students, options choices have been finalised and Mr Slater will contact the parents of those students whose choices are yet to be confirmed.

## Free School Meals

I am really pleased that the Government responded to a campaign spear-headed by Marcus Rashford to ensure the national Free School Meals voucher scheme will continue during the summer break. This will give some peace of mind to many families across the country. If you are in receipt of Free School Meals vouchers you will receive these in the usual way until the end of August 2020.

## Well-being

Promoting positive mental health and well-being is more important than ever during these challenging times. Our pastoral staff are in regular contact with those students they feel may need a little extra support, or who have reached out directly to them. If you or your child would benefit from some pastoral support, please liaise directly with their Climate for Learning Leader or a member of the Pastoral Support Team. There is plenty of help and lots of people ready and eager to provide it; we encourage anyone in need to speak out.

Hopefully, you have already had the opportunity to read some issues of our weekly FocusOn...Well-being newsletter, which provides some fun tips and suggestions for students to stay positive and healthy whilst encouraging them to stay in contact with us. In addition to this, Mrs Kearsley and Mrs Blanchard have planned several RESPECT lessons for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 to complete through Remote Classroom over the next few weeks and students can expect to receive contact from their form tutor. If you or your child need a little 'pick me up', have a look at next week's feel-good assembly that Mr Lucas has created.

## Black Lives Matter

I recently received an open letter from a group of former and current students regarding the Black Lives Matter movement, the importance of tackling racism in all its forms and how education has a vital role to play. I was impressed and reassured to see young people use their voices to take a stand and put forward their views in a very measured, proactive and effective way. In my response, I explored how the school and the current curriculum seek to address these issues and support students in developing a good sense of social justice. I also explained how we are committed to reviewing what we teach and the opportunities we provide all our young people with a broad and balanced education. Mrs Harrison-Forsyth and Miss MacDougall both recently delivered virtual assemblies on the theme of Black Lives Matter to help students better understand some of the issues and to challenge their thinking. They can be found [here](#) and are well worth taking a few minutes to watch.

There is a degree of excitement and anticipation about the return of Years 10 and 12 next week. I know their teachers are looking forward to the face to face sessions and getting back to teaching. For those who are not returning this term, keep persevering, continue to try your best with the work your teachers set you and we shall look forward to seeing you in the near future.

With very best wishes.

D A Mackenzie  
Headteacher