



Herne Bay High School

Specialist Sports College

Bullockstone Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7NS
☎ 01227 361221 ✉ principal@hernebayhigh.org



29th January 2021

Dear Parent / Carers

As January moves into February and half term looms on the horizon, I have little concrete news to share in terms of a return to normal school for all students.

The media has daily reports on what they profess to be happening. They speculate on when full return will happen, which year groups may be prioritised and whether the primary or secondary sector will be first.

What we do know, following the Prime Minister's announcement this week is:

- The earliest schools might 'begin to re-open' will be Monday 8 March, which is the start of the third school week after the half-term holiday.
- There will be a plan/review set out on Monday 22 February - the first day after the half-term holiday) - with further updates.
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will receive two weeks' notice.
- Schools will be fully closed to all students during half term week (Monday 15 to Friday 19 February).

For many of you this will bring mixed feelings, some happy that safety and science is being considered seriously before a decision is made, others upset that more schooling is being missed.

What I can reiterate from my many letters and messages is, that if your child engages with their online remote learning every day, gets the work that is asked of them completed, they WILL NOT fall behind, but will continue to make positive progress. I do reiterate that they MUST be involved in the online lessons, make notes, participate, do the work, be focused, and take it seriously. I am so impressed with the vast majority of students and how they have embraced the high-quality teaching and shown eager participation. I also recognise the sterling work that many of you as parents and carers have put in supporting your children in these complex times.

We take the wellbeing of you all very seriously, daily calls are being made to families, dedicated support is on hand for technical issues, homework has been reduced, screen time cut back at the teachers discretion and many extra-curricular clubs, activities and fitness sessions put on. I can reassure you that everyone at HBHS is working tirelessly to get through this together, so that we can come out the other side in good shape.

You can keep up to date with all that is going on by linking in via Facebook and Twitter or regularly visiting the school website. www.facebook.com/hernebayhigh www.twitter.com/hernebayhigh

Another development we have put in place this week is linking learning support assistants (LSA's) to teaching classes. We are then using the "Breakout Room" function in Microsoft Teams; this allows small group conversations / support for some students where they are finding the work challenging. Your feedback on this would be appreciated.



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Parent feedback: Please can I ask that you take a few minutes to complete a short online survey to help us keep developing our remote learning:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hWjal_GHVEgyo15jji2S08TulbuLpztHt6FwMS-F-PTJUOEdivIAxTFFMNzIERDYyWkFMNjNaNDJUMy4u

I would encourage you, if possible, to also take a short break every now and then. Your wellbeing does rub off on your children. What better way than to have a cup of tea and read the latest edition of the HERON parent newspaper. Click on this link and immerse yourself with hope. [The Magazine for Parents - Edition 11 \(office.com\)](#)

Engagement reports

Before half term we will be sending a short report home that gives an *indication of how the teacher perceives your child to be engaging in their online learning.*

The letter that accompanies the report is very clear in explaining where the information comes from, how it can be used but most importantly, it is ONLY part of the picture. You should use it how you see fit, alongside the telephone calls you may have had with the school, any e-mails received and your knowledge of what your child is doing on a day to day basis. We are fully aware these are challenging times and it is easy to be knocked back by a report, but it is also really motivating for you to be able to praise your child for a good report. It should be seen as another piece of the jigsaw to help you see the bigger picture.

I am sure you will agree that if we did not tell you anything until your child returned to school, you would be at the very least upset and concerned, whereas this information used carefully, as explained in the letter, should help you be better informed. Of course, if there is anything that the report raises, we are more than happy to address it via the year teams

Year 11,12 & 13 Summer exams GUIDANCE

We are in the process of a national consultation, the outcome of which should shed clarity on what is required by the school and by students due to sit exams in the summer and as soon as we have definite details I shall share this with you. However, we need to make sure we have planned in advance for every eventuality so we shall be making a few alterations for all exam classes after half term.

It is almost certain that the school will require for each student, an “evidence base” on which we generate grades that we will then send to the examination boards by June 2021. The DfE have also been clear that “no student should be disadvantaged by a situation beyond their control”. As such **EVERY STUDENT** due to sit examinations this summer has an opportunity to help create that evidence in the coming weeks and months, regardless of whether we are back in school.



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This means that if your son / daughter has not been diligent in accessing their lessons, has not been completing some of the work, they do still have a chance to work towards a better grade over the coming weeks. The consequence of doing no work as we move forward **WILL** impact on their GCSE / A level grades.

I will write again before the February break with greater detail that after half term all students in year's 11 & 13 and those in year 12 taking exams, will be having **regular assessments** that will help them demonstrate knowledge as part of their own evidence base. These are NOT mock exams, but smaller topic tests sat in their remote class so please encourage your children to be involved. We will still be undertaking a "mock style" exam when they return to school.

I also want to reassure every student in an examination year that we will support you to get the grade you deserve and get you to the next step in your education journey, be that 6th form, college or university.

As ever please all keep to the national guidance, "stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives".

Moving back full circle to the start of my letter, and to quote the opening of this month's HERON magazine, that talks about hope "*hope is a good thing, and good things never die*". Let us all hope together that we are moving towards better times, with schooling, travel, socialisation and even, dare I say it, holidays.

Look after yourselves and take care.

Mr Boyes
Principal.