



TO CARE
TO LEARN
TO ACHIEVE

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL
A Specialist Business and Enterprise College
with Applied Learning
Headteacher: Mrs H J Phillips

21st May 2020

Year 10 – Update from the Headteacher

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am sure that you have been a little confused this week about conflicting messages about when schools will open to students again. I would like to offer you some reassurances and clarification regarding the Bedford High School position.

Since closure, Bedford has offered places for children of parents/guardians who are essential workers. A small number of families have availed themselves of this service. It has been offered and used on a 'needs' basis. This means that children could come into school in line with parents/guardians working days. This is agreed in advance with parents. This has worked well and we will continue to offer this service.

We have also offered places to vulnerable children who may have had difficulties learning at home due to a special educational need or disability or who have other factors that meant learning in school was best for them. Again this was agreed on an individual basis. We will continue to offer this service as long as it is safe to do so.

The government has not indicated a return to school for any secondary year group other than Year 10. Years 7-9 will continue to learn from home.

The government's ambition is that year 10 have some face time with their teachers before the end of the summer term, as long as their 5 'tests' are met. They have said that a final decision about this will be made at the end of May. This is where confusion has arisen and has led to questions about when Year 10 will go back to school and what will their return look like? What we do know is that the provision for year 10 will not be the whole year group in together and will not be full time provision because the science is saying that puts too much movement by young people into communities.

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What that looks like in individual schools very much depends on the size and structure of the school and staffing levels available. Just like the government, every school has to be led by the science and will work out what is a 'safe' level of risk for their community.

For our school, in our community, we are completing our risk assessment and will invite year 10 students in, when it is safe to do so, in small groups and on different days. According to the latest government guidance, it is still important to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible, and we can take steps to achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, and staff where possible, mix in a small group and keep that small group away from other people and groups.

We are also mindful of other considerations. Some of our students have underlying health issues which means it would be dangerous for them to come into school. Some of our students live with family members who have underlying health issues which means it would be dangerous for their family if they came into school. Some students need to use public transport to get to school which puts them at a risk their parents/guardians are not willing to take. All of the above are real and valid reasons for these children to learn at home.

We also realise that some of our students are suffering from the lock down restrictions and would benefit from having some face to face contact in school and we will provide that for them.

I will write to you again and share our planned protocols for keeping your children safe and when they will be invited in to school, so that you can make an informed decision about their attendance. Thanks to those of you who have responded to our text request letting us know your intentions at this stage.

I may only be able to give you relatively short notice about when each group of students will be invited into school, given that it is half term next week, but to help with your own planning I can tell you that there will be no return to school for any groups of year 10 before the w/c 8th June.

I know that, we all crave normality or, at the very least, certainty. I am aware that this is neither. What I can tell you, with absolute certainty, is that Bedford High School will always make decisions based on what is best for our children's safety and welfare.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. J. Phillips', written in a cursive style.

Mrs H Phillips
Headteacher

