

**MINUTES OF THE PARENTS FORUM MEETING ON
THURSDAY 7th MAY ON ZOOM**

Mrs Gale explained how school closure came about and the priority in getting paper based resources and Free School Meals set up. Parent Forum focus on answering questions in three areas.

In responding to concerns about how schools might reopen, Mrs Gale stated that the announcement on Sunday would guide the decision. She would be trying to get balance right between supporting children, education and their emotional welfare.

We are in the process of returning our provision for children of keyworkers and vulnerable students from Albany back to Bramcote College as from Monday. A lot of work is being done with the team to support and help the students, working out how we make up for the loss of education.

The local governing body held meeting last week and Cathy Peacock joined the Parent Forum as one of the things she was concerned about is staff wellbeing.

Heidi Gale said as she goes through the questions received from parents, she will give very frank answers and parents would be given the opportunity to ask questions at the end.

Focus 1: Returning to school

- When and how we might return?
- Will all schools follow one rule to return or will each school do it individually?
- If there is a phased return, will it be one day in and one day out. How will it be managed?
- How will social distancing be when all go back?
- Year 7's, I presume, won't be the first to go back, but they can't be forgotten about. They have just moved to secondary school, and the learning is so different to primary that they need help and guidance from teachers.

Heidi Gale explained that they have been doing some planning and one plan might look like one year group in for one day i.e. year 7 day, year 8 day etc. We have considered running the school in two shifts i.e. one group in the morning, one group in the afternoon, starting at 8am and breaking for lunch. Students would have lunch at home and during this time the school could be cleaned. If the Government says that only years 10 and 12 should return that will create problems. The reality is that our classrooms are designed to hold 30 children but these would need to be reduced 10 or 12 meaning more teachers would be needed to cover the lessons and we do not have the capacity for this.

We will certainly not return until we can be 100% sure that it will be safe for our children and staff to do so. On Monday myself and some colleagues will be walking the school and looking at one-way systems, hand sanitisers, hygiene and cleaning classrooms. Perhaps putting tables in the hall.

Focus 2: Supporting online learning

- How do we keep students motivated, especially when the parent is working from home and have to keep priorities at a working level?
- I would like to know whether there is the option for lessons to be held by teachers over the net. The work books are very good but as time goes on it would be good for students to get a more interactive experience?
- How to make English home learning as practical and self-learning? as Math and Science? In order to facilitate English distance-learning (especially writing), can students for example be given *samples* of writing for each task they are assigned to, especially for those who are struggling with the language like my son?
- Is it possible that teachers *video-record* themselves explaining some lessons, making them available through SharePoint, at least once a month? This would also give a sense of contact to the students.
- Other schools are videoing lessons - why aren't you doing this? Shorter video lessons would be a massive improvement.
- It doesn't sound like year 7's will get back into school soon, so an improvement in the teacher interaction is going to be required?
- We've been trying hard to work through the booklets and things, but it's definitely not the same as having a teacher there to explain things, and help where needed. The lack of feedback to students from the work they are completing at home. There does not seem to be a standard way of submitting work and getting it marked which does seem to be happening in other schools.
- My Maths' platform times out if you spend time on the lesson and then need time to work out the answers to the questions; which is really stressful as you don't know how much time you have left and then all the questions reset including those you have already answered – Maths dept aware no real solution here.
- KS3 Where would you like the work saved? Is the work going to get marked?
- What are your expectations of my child's work? How many hours are you expecting each day? My child doesn't receive an email each day and is therefore not clear what work she should be doing that day.
- For post 16 - can the school provide some online classes with their teachers for the students instead of only providing some written work? The students need some subject explanations.

Jenny Read explained that some the questions were similar but she has tried to group them together and answer all queries everyone wanted to know.

Many of you wanted to know how to keep children motivated, particularly when parents are at home trying to do their own work. The answer is that it is extremely difficult. Some children are extremely motivated whilst others are battling to even get them to open their reading books.

I am suggesting that students should do things in small chunks, they are not being expected to study for long periods. Get them to study for 30/45 minutes and then go and do something else. Get them to follow the timetables they have been given and they are the minimum expectations from school. In between encourage them to go out for fresh air and exercise. If you are really struggling with them, give them a break for a few days.

The curriculum has been suspended and there is no expectation from the government for schools or young people actually to do any school work. It is understandable that parents and students are anxious and we should be mindful of their mental health. Perhaps ask them to choose English and maths and two other subjects that they really love and get them to focus on them.

The next group of questions were asking whether there would be live lessons broadcast by teachers. The answer is we will not be offering live which is a decision which has been made on the basis of safeguarding and access to IT.

In terms of safeguarding, it is difficult to control. Technology and the risk that it poses to both teachers and students in a variety of ways. If students are accessing live lessons in their bedrooms on their own devices, that poses huge risks for children to make allegations about things that teachers have said or done. It poses a huge risk in terms of children being unsupervised with an external adult in their home, it poses a risk of what may be happening in the background and may be seen by teachers and other students. We feel it is not a risk worth taking. There is also an added issue around Zoom having a lack of encryption, extreme pornographic material being sent into zoom meetings, there are issues with monitoring students on screen. We do not feel that the benefits outweigh the risks.

With regard to streaming through Microsoft Teams, it is the view of our Safeguarding Lead and the Governors that it is not good teaching practice to live stream. The other problem is that a lot of our children at Bramcote College do not have adequate technology to do these things.

There were questions about pre-recorded clips and that is something that staff are starting to do and we have had some training on how to do this. We are leaving it for staff to decide whether they are happy to do this. Some staff have are not used this technology and do not have the facilities at home.

We have been prioritising our phone calls home on the basis that we can see who have not accessed their emails or logged onto Microsoft Teams. Teachers are monitoring and I am getting a weekly update. Teachers can see what platforms students are accessing, i.e. SENICA, MyMaths and what work they are doing.

Heidi Gale stated that contacting parents was not just to check on whether students were doing work but to ask if they needed support and there are some concerns about children's wellbeing, so contacting out of concern.

With regard to the question regarding students being given samples of work and model answers, I shall be asking teachers to provide this in the future, where appropriate, as this is something that would be done in a lesson.

With regard to the questions around marking, for years 7 and 8, we are not expecting students to submit work for marking. The tasks being provided are not assessment marks, they are learning tasks for students to go through at their own pace. In our view we do not want to put pressure on students to complete work that is going to be graded, to be completed on their own, is not going to be beneficial for their wellbeing and for their mental health. On the Sharepoint site on every subject there is a folder where students can save their work if they need help with it or if they just want to share what they have done. Teachers can also be emailed anything students want to share with them. We do not feel it is practical for teachers to mark and comment on every piece of work from students.

However, in year 9, 10 and 12 students are being set assessed work and being asked to return their work to teachers via Microsoft Teams where they can upload their work and again, priority is being given to students who do not appear to be submitting those assessed pieces of work. We want to focus teacher marking on students who are doing exam courses.

With regard to the question that some subjects seem to be better monitored than others, Jenny Read could only comment on years 7 and 8 and assured parents that work had been set for all subjects and she was personally monitoring the work being uploaded.

Heidi Gale said as far as years 9, 10 and 12 were concerned, the work was being monitored by Heads of Department.

Jenny Read explained that all maths work was being put on MyMaths and she was personally putting history work into the shared folder on sharepoint.

Jo Cooper said that as far as her year 9 photography group was concerned, they were being very active and sharing work on Teams.

Heidi Gale was aware that there were some issues with MyMaths as far as assessing the lesson was concerned but she has spoken with maths and but it is Mymaths that need to fix the problem of the lesson timing out. This is just a technical issue but we are looking at other software providers and will be investing in other packages for the future.

In response to the question about how many hours children should be doing each day, she said that students should be following their timetable and they can find a copy on the website, on the shared point and it was provided with their work pack. Having first tried sending emails to every student every day, it became apparent that some students were being overwhelmed by these emails or were not accessing them. We therefore made the decision to move to sharepoint and put the resources on there so that students could log on when they are able to and follow their timetable at their own pace.

Heidi Gale informed parents that there are plenty of resources that can be access through the facebook page. Jenny Read also added that there were all the links on sharepoint that students could access.

With regard to the question regarding year 8 missing options, we do not have options in year 8 at Bramcote College. We have a 3 year plan in KS3 and a 2 year plan in KS4. The process begins in Year 9 who are being given work to motivate them and have a go at.

We can confirm that Reports have been published on Go4Schools giving a summary of where students were before the school closure. There will not be any parents evenings this year. If additional information or feedback is required SLT/SENCo can be contacted to help.

With regard to parents getting information about how to use sharepoint, Jenny Read confirmed that she was happy to put together an email for parents.

In answer to the year 9 Immunisation program, Alison Pascual confirmed that this has been suspended for now but will take place as soon as students are back in school and parents will be informed.

Reports have been issued on Go4Schools for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 in each subject. It has their targets, current grades, attitude to learning. Most year groups have also had their full written reports for the year.

Heidi Gale also said that if parents wanted any additional feedback on a child by child basis, that could be arranged, particularly if they were children who had additional needs.

Focus 3: Concerns about academic outcomes for all students & the future

- Will any leniency be given to year 10s, given that they have missed really important learning period ahead of GCSEs?
- Are there any plans for them to redo the whole of year 10?
- When students return, will they miss the full term of learning or pause the year and start the year again?
- What is the plan to help students catch up on all the lessons they've missed?
- How year 12 will catch up everything when they have A levels next year?
- How year 12 will finish the term? Will there be any online exam or assessment for year 12 to assess them?
- Have Year 8 missed options?
- I know the GCSEs will be sorted for this years' students but what will be done to ensure the year 9's have fair exam results when they have their GCSE exams after missing schooling in these terrible times?
- What changes are likely to have been made for the start of the next academic year? How will school look compared to this year?
- What changes are likely to have been made for the start of the next academic year? How will school look compared to this year?
- Will we be getting any school reports this year, or the opportunity to discuss children's progress with teachers, as there's been no parents evening?

Heidi Gale discussed the academic outcomes for students in the future. We will be doing our very best to help children. All of the children will be in the same position. Be well is at the core of our school. Everyone will work hard to get our children to where they need to be.

The Government has abolished all league tables for this year. The reality is that everyone will go back to school 2 to 3 months behind and there will unfortunately be some loss of learning across the curriculum.

Year 10 will absolutely be given leniency and they will not be expected to re-do year 10. This would create more problems. Over the next few weeks staff will be looking at what matters in this year's curriculum that we can put onto next year's curriculum and where can we do some rejigging.

Regarding year 12 catching up when they have A levels, we will have to look at what we are doing. The exam board and Ofqual have given some good answers but have left a lot of questions unanswered. Year 11 and 13 will be given Centre -assessed grade which will be moderated by the exam board this year and have told us that there will be some exams available to fit in the autumn term but no exam board has committed to this. It is likely that Year 11s and 13s next year that there will be some revision of the exam they will be sitting.

Jo Cooper added that parents and students of year 11 and 13 have received letters on the plans for grading and copies are on the school website which explain process that the school is going through. This information is being constantly updated.

Heidi Gale expressed her heartfelt concern about the question asking what the school will look like when we return. She explained that there would be the need to provide social distancing whilst providing education as best as they could. She wants everyone to be back in school as soon as possible and she said she was planning for staff and students to be back in school by September but she has issues and concerns around staff being back in school. A whole lot of issues to be thinking about.

HOPE have been providing food parcels and if there are any parents who would like support from them, they do a very fast turnaround. Please get in touch if you need help.

Jo Cooper said there were lots of ways that parents could contact the school with any concerns. The IT department was helping with technical issues and Heidi Gale said that the school mobile phone was being answered during school hours and messages could be passed to SLT and staff to return calls.

There has been a question for laptops for some students and let parents know that the week before school was closed the school ordered over 20 laptops which were given to some year 11 and 13 students who at the time would need them. Some of the year 11 and 13 students are returning these laptops and we will be trying to loan these to students who are really in need of them. We are having trouble trying to order laptops because everyone is wanting them.

We are also asking parents who receive free school meals to contact us if they need anything as some family's circumstances have changed very quickly and it is taking time for this to be processed. In the meantime, we have been working with a charity HOPE who will get food parcels out to families really quickly. Please contact Jo or Mrs Gale if you have any concerns about these things. We are trying to help as many people as we can.

Jo Cooper praised HOPE and told parents that they are an amazing organization and the contact she has been dealing with will arrange deliveries from request within 24 hours.

Q: Has the current situation disrupted the school build?

Paul Heery confirmed that it is very likely that the school build has been disrupted and whilst they have been pushing to get an agreement signed with Nottinghamshire County Council, they are still waiting for this to be done. Solicitors have been instructed but he said it was unlikely they would get any formal agreement until the County Council are able to divert their attention away from dealing with the current crisis. Until a legal agreement has been signed, we are unable to go any further.

Parents have asked how they can expedite this situation and the best thing people can do is to contact County Council or the Borough Council and to ask when the agreement will be signed in order for the new building to go ahead. It is impossible to say how long this will take. Until the agreement is signed we cannot go any further as this is what will unlock the money to proceed.

Jenny Read answered the question concerning transition from year 6 to year 7. She has sent out welcome packs to year 6s along with a link for an online details form to complete. She has been in contact with primary schools to get all the information that she would normally get face to face from primary school teachers about all of the students who are joining us. I will be waiting until Sunday to see what Boris Johnson has to say about schools before deciding what we are going to do about

transition. Normally I would visit all students in their school with the head of Year 7 but I will be having virtual meeting with primary school students. I will also be contacting parents to gather further information about their children. Mary Kirby and I will making individual to parents with special needs and arrange meetings with them. In terms of induction days, I will need to wait and see what happens but it is my hope that the year 6 children, perhaps in smaller groups, to come into school across more days.

Heidi Gale proposed that we meet more regularly. We will organize a date a month from today.