



Queensbury Academy
Langdale Road
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 3BU

Tel: 01582 601241
Fax: 01582 476988
principal@queensburyacademy.com
www.queensburyacademy.com

Dear Parents/Carers

Principal's Update

Firstly - I hope you are all keeping well. We continue to live in a rapidly changing world as we adapt to coming out of lockdown. In education this is very pronounced as we begin to cautiously but warmly welcome back some students in Years 10 and 12 who are due to take exams next year. Safety continues to be our number one priority for students and staff and therefore their families too.

Re-opening the site to more students

We have made a number of adaptations to the Academy site which I have already written to parents/carers of our Year 10 and 12 students to ensure all who work and learn there feel safe. These include:

- entry/exit procedures so timings are staggered to avoid groups of students coming or going at the same time
- hand washing/sanitizing on arrival
- doors where possible propped open to limit door handle use
- small numbers on site at any one time
- students and staff in separate designed pods to limit numbers and contact
- tissues/ hand sanitiser/ wipes in venues and each student having access to their own personal bottle
- cleaning of venues and communal areas each day
- Visible reminders of social distancing in place
- One-way systems to avoid students passing each other

Our Year 10 and 12 students have been in last week to see their tutors and have now started some small group face to face subject support sessions. Only 25% of students are allowed in at one time and so we have ensured we are following the government guidance bearing in mind the context of our buildings and staffing capacity. Students have reported back to us how helpful this has been and how safe they have felt coming back to the Academy.

Many of these adaptations to the site and routines may well be in place for September when we hopefully begin to welcome back other year groups. The Government is due to outline what social distancing measures will be in place in September but whatever it is our aim will be to keep everyone safe and so we are planning for a number of different scenarios. As soon as we have got further guidance I, of course, will let you know what the likely plans are. It is important to say that staff have genuinely missed the students and we are looking forward to working face to face with them again.

Remote learning

For other year groups in Years 7, 8 and 9 we have been impressed with how hard many have been working which is difficult to do as it does mean students have had to become a lot more independent. However, as the time since they left



school grows, I am aware we need to reach out even more to ensure students stay engaged and also feel connected with the Academy. In terms of supporting students home learning we are now in a position to initiate a phased approach to 'live learning' via Microsoft Teams, and are planning to start by using interactive, support sessions via the chat function in Microsoft Teams each week for each subject so students can connect with their teachers and ask questions about the work if they get stuck. More information about this will be sent to you later this week. Some staff may also start to trial other 'live' formats in order to add another level of engagement. The priority in this process is keeping children safe online and we are researching and planning appropriately so our high standards of safeguarding Queensbury students are continued whilst learning with us in this way. Before the summer break, tutors will also be phoning home to speak to their tutees to check how they are emotionally and how they are doing academically. I believe the more we can keep your son/daughter engaged and feeling connected with the Academy the less anxious they will be about coming back in September.

Supporting your son/daughter working at home may well be difficult at this time as you may be dealing with a number of issues within your personal and professional lives. Please make sure you seek advice and guidance. The Academy's staff is always available to chat through education issues with you. There is also some great advice and support out there in the community [Advice and support](#) .

Catch up funding

We are very pleased to hear that the Government are providing schools with more money to help students catch up in the coming year. In the coming weeks we will look at the guidance around this money, how much we are likely to receive, and begin to look at how to use it to help students catch up. I know there has been some talk of summer schools however I cannot say at this time if this money is to be used for this purpose. I would say it is more likely it will be used to support students catching up with the curriculum next term. We are looking very carefully at our curriculum and how we can help students close the gaps they have but also build up their resilience again so they feel like confident learners who can get back on track and continue to aim for those high aspirations and ambitions. We will have a good plan in place by September to ensure students do catch up. If you do go abroad on holiday and the requirement to go into quarantine is still the guidance on your return then please ensure your son/daughter is back in time for the start of September.

Further examinations

We are also awaiting guidance on the examinations in 2021 for next year's Yr11 and 13 students. It is likely they will be later in the term and may have a different format to them with some reduced content to make sure that no students are disadvantaged. Once we know this we can finalise how we can arrange what we teach and when.

Finally

So in summary, yes there are many unknowns still to work through. However I am very proud of our community. Parents have been overwhelmingly supportive. Staff have pulled together and learnt very new ways of approaching their profession. Students have produced some excellent work and have kept in touch well with their tutors. In September your son/daughter will come back to a place that is still centred around our CARE (Cooperation, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour) values with staff who still care very much about your son/daughter and their future.

I will write to you again before the summer break to clarify where we are at with our planning to ensure your son/daughter's transition back is smooth and successful.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Mark Little
Principal

