



14 May 2020

Dear Families

High Weald Academy - Update

Firstly I take this chance to thank you for the support you have offered the academy in the past 8 weeks as we have navigated some of the most difficult times together. Your positive feedback, patience and appreciation have meant a lot to all of us. We have all had to learn new ways of working and living, often not knowing if we are getting it right or doing it well enough – none of us have ever done this before and the same is true for you. What we do know about ourselves at home and at school is that we want the very best for our students and will always prioritise what we think is in their best interests – especially in uncertain times and we must continue to support them and each other in every way we can.

As you will be aware the Prime minister announced the United Kingdom government's plans to move forward from our current period of lockdown. This included some detail about how educational provision might be extended for some specified year groups and in the secondary sector this focused on including some 'face to face' time with teachers for students in years 10 and 12 which could begin at the earliest from 1 June 2020.

Over the past few days schools have received some more detail about what that potential move forward may look like and also where schools will need to make their own decisions. This information has also included that although the government have stated the earliest date for any change will be 1 June, this will be reviewed again at the end of May and so is not a confirmed position until then.

Academy and Trust leaders are currently planning what an extended provision for our students will look like and we will be back in touch with families once we are able to confirm details and arrangements. We are obviously conscious that years 7, 8 and 9 are not currently part of the expansion plans and will remain at home, working remotely as they have been up until now. In light of this we will also be reviewing our provision for those students in order to make sure they continue to be best supported during term 6.

As you will imagine there are a number of complexities in making our plans and a number of factors that need to be considered – not least how we will implement social distancing requirements, increased cleaning regimes, availability of teaching and support staff, the use of rooming and the staffing of an increased number of classes due to smaller numbers of students in a class as well as considering the start and end times of the day to enable staff and students using public transport to have a choice of travel times, in order to manage their potential exposure to coronavirus between home and school.

There are several things that are clear that I would like to share with you now in order to help manage your planning and expectations:

- There will not be a return to the full timetable before the end of this academic year
- In-school face to face time will supplement and not replace on-line learning
- It is very unlikely that year 10 students will attend school every day
- The provision we offer will be for a fixed number of students at a time, on a rotation
- In school learning will focus on reinforcing and revising topics and content that has been set during the home-learning period
- We will endeavour to provide a variety of learning sessions, but not all subjects will be covered
- Being in school will look and feel very different to what we are used to – unstructured time will be minimal as will movement around the buildings
- Attendance to school will be encouraged but not compulsory and families must continue to make the decision that is right for them

What you can be sure of is that we will provide the very best package for students that we can, given the restrictions and practical realities that we will need to work within. We are currently conducting a number of

risk assessments in line with the Health and Safety Executive, Public Health England and DFE guidance so that we offer students and staff the safest environment possible.

Our students belong in school with us. We are heartened at the prospect of a return to on-site schooling but we will not compromise the health and safety of any member of our community. The provision we start with will be small and manageable, meaning we can test our systems and procedures. Once we know we have got it right we will then look at building and extending our offer to students.

We continue to offer a supervised study space for the children of keyworkers who cannot be safely looked after at home. If you think your child might be eligible for this provision please refer to our [Academy Closure FAQs](#) on the academy website for registration information.

I will write to you again next week to update you on our plans. In the meantime thank you again for all you are doing to support students at home.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Hatley
Executive Principal