



Great Marlow School

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Dear Parents/ Carers

As the government's request for the partial and gradual reopening of schools continues to be discussed and debated on all forms of modern media, I feel it is important that I update you on the latest thinking of the leadership team and governors of Great Marlow School (GMS). What is becoming clear is that unlocking the country, and schools in particular, is an ardently debated topic, and like many issues whether it be politics, religion or sport, some people have diametrically opposing views to others. On the reopening of schools, what cannot be argued with is that increasing the number of people on school premises increases the risk of the virus being transmitted and caught. There is guidance, published by the DfE on Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare Settings, which I shared with you in my letter on the 13th May. Implementing these measures will help reduce the risk, but will not eliminate it.

Like many schools, GMS has remained open to the children of identified key workers and vulnerable children, for essential childcare, since schools were asked, by government, to close to the majority of children on the 20th March. Since lockdown we have continued to support these children in term time from 8.35 – 3.00pm every day, in addition when required during school holidays, and have implemented appropriate protective measures. This has been possible because of the relatively small number of students and adults on site. The priority groups identified by the government are:

- children of key/critical workers who require essential childcare to enable them to work
- 'vulnerable children', defined as children who have a child in need plan; a child protection plan; or who are a looked after child
- children who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

As I highlighted in my letter of the 13th May, secondary schools have been asked by the government to prepare for some face-to-face support, specifically for Year 10 and Year 12. GMS are arranging to do this by adding categories of students to the identified priority groups listed above.

The planned new categories of students will be from the Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts. A small number of students are to be invited into school for face-to-face support. This programme will commence after the 1st June and on a date yet to be confirmed. The face-to-face support will supplement, not replace, the remote learning currently offered through Show My Homework (SMHW). Staff will provide specific learning strategies to help students manage their remote learning timetable and/or give support for wellbeing purposes. It is envisaged that the vast majority of the cohort, in these two year groups, will continue with remote learning in the current manner. Please note, a further expansion to this programme will only be adopted if the national scientific evidence clearly endorses it, and it is appropriate to do so in our local context. In the same way, if information is presented that necessitates a reduction in numbers, we will not hesitate to do this; our approach will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

As this has to be carefully managed, the new priority groups will be chosen by form tutors, teachers and the Director of Learning for that year group. Invitations will be sent out to parents or carers: students can only be on site if they have been invited and with the agreement of parents or carers. Students who do attend will not be required to wear school uniform, just appropriate clothing. GMS will carry out a detailed risk assessment prior to an increased number of students being on site.

Although attendance of all eligible children is encouraged by the government, parents and carers will not be fined for non-attendance. Based on the latest guidance, I still believe that you, as guardians, are best placed to decide if school attendance is in the best interests of the health and wellbeing of your family.

In order to support the planning and preparation for an increased number of students in school, I am asking parents and carers to complete a survey for each of their children at GMS. This will enable us to plan for the additional specific support being organised, and give us information that will allow us to revise our approach as new government guidelines are announced. So, please complete the appropriate survey(s) for your child(ren)'s year groups.

The survey for each individual year group can be accessed via the links below:

[Year 7](#)

[Year 8](#)

[Year 9](#)

[Year 10](#)

[Year 12](#)

Finally, I would like to reiterate that nothing would give me greater pleasure than seeing an increased number of students in school. The past 10 weeks have been a very bizarre experience indeed: believe me, being in a near empty buildings that have the capacity to cater for 1500 people took some adjustment. What I miss most is the camaraderie; the daily interaction with wonderful staff and wonderful students that makes GMS the fantastic place it is.

Our approach to this next phase will be measured and appropriate and one where the health and wellbeing of students and staff must, and will, take precedence.

Best wishes

Kevin Ford
Headteacher