



# Great Marlow School

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Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

I am very pleased to write to you to inform you that the wider opening of Great Marlow School to Year 10 and Year 12 students since the 15<sup>th</sup> June has gone very smoothly and that the attendance has been very good. All the staff at school have thoroughly enjoyed seeing an increasing number of students. Over the past week and half, 90% of the Year 12 cohort have attended lessons and just over 80% of Year 10. It remains the decision of parents/ carers whether their sons/daughters attend the allocated sessions for their year group at this time, those that have attended have benefitted enormously.

GMS follows closely Government guidance and this guidance allows schools the flexibility to make decisions about their in-school provision based on the individual circumstances and context. Therefore, following the announcement of the easing of restrictions, I am delighted that we are now able to implement our detailed plans to allow students in Years 7, 8 and 9 the opportunity to return to school for a period of time before the 17<sup>th</sup> July. Again, it is a decision for parents/ carers to make on whether they want their sons/daughters to attend on their allocated days. The overview of the plan is shown below, the specific details for each year group will follow in individual communications to the appropriate year group.

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

- Priority Groups – will continue to be supported in the same way as they have been since the 1st June
- Year 12 - the in-school provision will follow the same timetable of lessons that has been in place since the 15th June
- Year 10 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each
- Year 7 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July**

- Priority Groups – will continue to be supported in the same way as they have been since the 1st June
- Year 12 - the in-school provision will follow the same timetable of lessons that has been in place since the 15th June
- Year 10 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each
- Year 8 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July**

- Priority Groups – will continue to be supported in the same way as they have been since the 1st June
- Year 12 - the in-school provision will follow the same timetable of lessons that has been in place since the 15th June
- Year 10 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each
- Year 9 - Monday to Thursday/Half Year Groups for two days each

As highlighted above, the priority groups will continue to be provided for as they have been since the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. Separate communication will follow before the end of this week for parents/ carers of all eligible children to complete the registration form in the same way as for previous weeks. Hopefully, the link to the form will work first time this week!

The Year 12 in-school lesson timetable as highlighted on the previous page will, broadly, continue to run as has been in place since Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. There may need to be a small number of lesson changes to accommodate the provision for other year groups. Any change will be communicated directly to the students by their class teacher.

The Governors, Leadership Team and the staff believe it is the right decision to offer all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 the opportunity to return to school before the end of the summer term. With the current easing of restrictions on society, it is now possible, and appropriate, to open the school more widely. However, this still presents quite a logistical challenge, not only to plan but also to explain clearly and concisely the details of the plan to all stakeholders.

The more detailed information with the arrangements for Year 10 and Year 7, for the week beginning the 29<sup>th</sup> June, will be communicated tomorrow afternoon, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June.

The detailed information for the week beginning 6<sup>th</sup> July for Year 10 and Year 8 will be communicated on or before Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

The final communication regarding the in-school provision for the week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> July for Year 10 and Year 9 will be communicated on or before Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **Microsoft Teams: Week commencing Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Since the closure of Great Marlow School to the majority of our students, we have strived to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is engaging, accessible and challenging for all. As some year groups have returned to school, it has been informative to see how technology has facilitated independence, both in the classroom and at home. However, neither teaching nor technology stands still. The innumerable challenges faced over the past few months have offered an exciting opportunity in the form of Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) which we hope will equip young people for their work in school and prepare them for life beyond school.

MS Teams has been successfully trialled over the last few weeks, with a number of classes, across different subject areas, and as a school we are confident that this offers a significant development for teaching and learning moving forward, both remotely and in school.

The feedback on MS Teams from students so far has been extremely positive, with many benefits shown over Show My Homework (SMHW) including:

- improved communication between students and their teachers
- improved way of working online and saving the work completed
- collaborative student to student discussion of tasks, via the 'chat' function
- easy editing of assessments and assignments
- safe storage of all work completed,

The school has used MS Teams for some 'live learning' conversations and this has proved beneficial for some, but not all students. However, the primary use of MS Teams going forward will be in the setting, completing and marking of work and the ability for students and staff to communicate via the 'chat' function. The week commencing 29<sup>th</sup> June has been nominated as transition week at Great Marlow School (GMS) when staff will gradually transfer the setting of all tasks to MS Teams from Show My Homework. For the remaining three weeks of this summer term we will continue to use SMHW to direct students to MS Teams to access the work set.

Students in Year 10 and 12 who have been in school have already received training on how to use MS Teams and with the Year 7, 8 and 9 students returning over the next 3 weeks this will give staff in school an ideal opportunity to support these students with MS Teams. However, please do allow time for issues to be resolved in the initial few weeks, for both staff and students, as everyone becomes more familiar with the MS Teams platform.

### **Microsoft Teams: Student Preparation**

In order to best prepare for this transition, GMS encourages all students, who have not yet familiarised themselves with Teams, to do the following:

- Download Office 365 onto their devices (this is free and can be accessed via a link on the school website)
- Download the MS Teams app onto their phone, laptop or tablet
- Download MS Word, PowerPoint and One Note onto their phones, laptop or tablet
- Become familiar with their school email address and password (please contact if this is unknown)
- Watch the short tutorial videos found below and on the school website

**For laptop use:** <https://www.loom.com/share/e736b49e60de4aaea30c3b962ff5ac05>

**For phone use:** <https://www.loom.com/share/3e92abd31ea84ca69f5563fd823fafc6>

We fully appreciate that some students, parents and carers may find the transition, from SMHW to MS Teams, more daunting than others; please be reassured that on-going support will be available, to ensure that the move is as smooth as possible. If a student has any difficulties with accessing the work through MS Teams, please encourage them to contact their class teacher in the first instance, or if the problem persists please email

[info@gms.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:info@gms.bucks.sch.uk) with a subject title FAO Teaching and Learning Group/MS Teams and a member of staff from this group will get back to you as soon as possible, usually by the end of the following working day.

As always, we are very grateful for the ongoing support of staff, parents, carers and students as we strive to make the teaching and learning experience at GMS as good as it can be.

Best wishes

Kevin Ford

**Headteacher**