



Friday 22nd May, 2020.

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of half-term there still seems to be a high degree of uncertainty about schools on a national basis. I wrote to parents of Year 10 earlier this week as the government have signalled an ambition to provide Year 10 pupils with some face-to-face contact to support their remote learning next half-term. We are working closely with schools across Warrington and our Challenge Academy Trust partners to ensure that we deliver an effective provision for pupils that is in line with government guidance. The problem we face at the moment is that the Department for Education haven't issued this guidance to secondary schools, 10 working days after suggesting it would be imminently available. Whilst we are proactively investing time in developing plans for what provision could look like, we have no clear indication from central government as to what provision should achieve in order to deliver a safe return to school for pupils based on key scientific understanding. This, as I'm sure you can imagine, is frustrating.

What we are primarily focused on at this time are the elements we can control; specifically our plans for continuing to deliver the curriculum to pupils in all year groups. Only nine weeks ago we hadn't introduced Microsoft Teams to our pupils or staff. Since then we have adapted to using the technology to develop a provision that allows for interactive lessons following our normal school timetable for all pupils, set assignments to be able to judge their understanding of the content delivered this half-term, conducted a whole school remote careers day, conducted a remote transition day for our year 6 pupils that was broadcast live, continued to issue reward post cards to pupils digitally, developed a weekly enrichment programme that pupils can access at home and developed our own enrichment video content that we share via our enrichment YouTube channel.

I'm staggered, but not surprised, by the innovation shown by staff and the dedication they have shown to adapt to the situation in order to provide the very best possible provision for pupils under these difficult circumstances. Staff have also committed to their own professional development across this period, attending training sessions each week – albeit online – to continue refining their craft to better support pupils. They have done this whilst ensuring that school remains open for the children of key workers and our vulnerable young people and checking of the welfare of pupils across the school. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and commitment. I'm immensely proud to work with them and this period has stood to further demonstrate the calibre of the staff at the school.

Similarly, the pupils have continued to make us proud away from school. We're so proud of their continued engagement and the many examples of excellent work that they have provided. They too have demonstrated ingenuity and the group of pupils working together to produce a music track remotely is a wonderful example of this.

This half term we issued over 1300 digital Going for Gold postcards to pupils, well deserved reward and recognition for the continued dedication of pupils toward their own studies and future success. I'd like to congratulate our young people for the tremendous attitude that they've adopted across this period.

PART OF THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST | NURTURE | CHALLENGE | ACHIEVE
THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

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Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH





School will remain open next week for the children of key workers and our vulnerable young people. As it is half-term, live lessons will not be conducted next week. Pupils have worked hard and we're aware that working in a way that is not familiar can be draining, so they deserve some down time and a break from the onscreen routine. Lessons will resume from Monday 1st of June as normal, continuing to follow the pupils' school timetable that they would usually follow in school.

Each Monday we issue our Enrichment Bulletin document, this is distributed to pupils via Teams and is also placed on the school website; the edition from this week can be found at https://www.penkethhigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Week-5_compressed.pdf. This document provides links to resources and activities to widen pupils' educational experiences beyond our curriculum lessons and also includes resources that can help support their wellbeing during what is likely to be a troubling and confusing time for them.

The wellbeing of our pupils remains our greatest priority and parents will be aware that form tutors have been contacting families of pupils in their form. Our welfare team are also working hard during this period to continue to support pupils and if you do have any concerns about your child please do not hesitate to contact us at school using the email address welfare@penkethhigh.org.

Finally can I thank you all for your ongoing support and for the kind messages that you've sent. We face unprecedented circumstances and we're determined to provide the very best provision that we can for pupils during their absence from school. This has brought a degree of challenge, as I'm sure you can appreciate, but the dedication and engagement of our pupils along with the support of parents helps inspire us to continue to provide the best possible remote experience.

I'd like to wish you all the very best and hope that you and your families remain in good health.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin
Principal.

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