

Monday 29th June, 2020.



Penketh High School

Dear Parents and Carers,

We had an incredibly busy and enjoyable week at school last week. Year 10 returned to undertake a more comprehensive timetable of lessons on site, completing sessions in English, Maths, Science, Humanities and Languages. This represents an important step towards the wider reopening of school for all pupils and we look forward to being able to welcome all pupils back to school as soon as guidance from the government allows. I am pleased to be able to let you know that it is our intention to provide all pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 with an opportunity to attend a meeting with their form tutors before the summer break. Of course, our plans to provide pupils with the chance to meet with form tutors before the end of the year is subject to guidance issued to schools from the government and we will update parents with further details over the next week.

Whilst we have welcomed back the vast majority of Year 10 back to school over the last two weeks and attendance has been exceptional, we recognise that a small number of pupils, for a number of reasons, have been unable to access school for their tutorials. We have been able to provide access to online tutorials for pupils who haven't been able to come to school and so we're pleased that technology has allowed us to ensure the pupils haven't missed out.

I'm sure that parents are aware of discussions on a national level regarding what are being called "zoom lessons", that is to say broadcast live lessons which appear to replicate lessons by having a continual staff presence. The school have not adopted this approach because, like with everything we do, we have considered the best practice and the evidence regarding remote/home learning to inform our delivery to pupils. The evidence is clear that the method of delivery is not as important as the quality of teaching, clarity of instruction or clarity of explanation. The Education Endowment Foundation state *"For example, teachers might explain a new idea live or in a prerecorded video. But what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on pupils' prior learning or how pupils' understanding is subsequently assessed."*

For example, pupils will be familiar with staff using pre-recorded videos as part of their lessons in Teams, along with other resources, to ensure that clear instructions within lessons, as our focus has been on developing our understanding of the best practice and pedagogy for lesson delivery through remote technology. We have also ensured that our lessons follow the structure of our usual school timetable so that pupils could follow the routine of lessons that they're familiar with and for staff to be able to interact with pupils through Teams and address questions that they raise.

We're extremely proud of the engagement of our young people across this period and the high quality work they've continued to produce either during lessons or during assignments that they've been set. This is typified by the current total of digital Going for Gold postcards we've issued to date exceeding 2500.

The technology has really enabled us to continue to engage with pupils in terms of the live interactive lessons, assignments, enrichment activities and careers events for example; but it has also allowed us to celebrate the success of pupils. This was a focus of our virtual Year 11 leavers assembly last week and although it's not the event or the goodbye that our young people deserved after an abrupt end to their Penketh career, it was important for us to conduct an event before the end of the school year.

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



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Unfortunately, circumstances have dictated that this couldn't be in school but we intend to welcome them back to school when we're in a position to have an event on site; similarly we intend to conduct their well-deserved prom event when where allowed to do so.

We've also be able to engage and interact with our new Year 6 cohort through various transition events over the course of this term. Again, whilst this is not the transition from primary we'd like to offer the latest members of our school community, being able to conduct events through Teams in form groups, conducting live tours and undertaking learning sessions has enabled pupils to meet staff and get a feeling for the school albeit remotely.

In normal circumstances, Friday would have been Warrington Walking Day and I'm sure you are aware that this is a staff training day. School will remain open to the children of keyworkers and to vulnerable pupils but interactive lessons in Teams won't be taking place; these will return on Monday 6th of July, 2020. On Friday staff will be involved in both training and various meetings relating to our planning for September.

We're very aware that a number of our pupils are missing their regular interactions with the range of literature available in our school library. Whilst pupils can't access the library during the period of closure, it's also highly unlikely they'll be able to access this for some weeks and months as pupils can't share physical resources. We recognise how integral the library is in school life and so we're pleased to report that we've secured a digital library provision that will provide pupils with 1500 secondary appropriate titles to "loan" and read on a dedicated app through their computer, tablet or mobile device. This is currently being linked to our existing library software and we will forward login details to pupils via Teams once this process is complete.

We'll also be developing some reading and comprehension activities for pupils to access via Teams that focus on some of the titles in the range available to pupils.

Today we've issued pupils with some career cluster information as we're asking pupils to consider and indicate their current thinking around their chosen career ahead of the new academic year. Pupils will then be assigned a cluster group that is centred around careers from their chosen field. Across the year pupils in each cluster will benefit from a range of experiences that help to inform them about this chosen career pathway and these include;

- Employer talks
- Work related experience visits
- Impartial career advice
- Targeted visits to college and HE provision

The intention is that this range of experiences will help pupils to consider and validate their career choices or consider alternatives. We consider pupils deciding that careers are not for them based on a range of comprehensive information is as important as validating a choice.



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With this in mind, over the next few weeks, we would like pupils to think carefully about their career cluster choices for the coming academic year. We will be providing them with a wealth of information and directing students where to find out more. In addition to this our careers advisor, Paula, is on hand to answer any further questions and pupils can email her directly paula.woodruff@careerconnect.org.uk. Pupils can also book a telephone appointment by emailing careersappointment@penkethhigh.org. By the 10th of July we would like every student to have declared their chosen cluster that interests them for the year ahead. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Ian Musgrove, imusgrove@penkethhigh.org.

Once again can I thank you for your on going support at this time. I'm sure you know that guidance for schools is changing almost daily and we're fortunate that our wonderful staff are extremely adaptable and proactive meaning that we can continue to provide pupils with the best provision in the current circumstances. We are expecting imminent guidance from the government relating to the conditions for full reopening from September. Once we receive this we'll plan in accordance to the guidance and relay information to parents as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin
Principal.

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