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Dear parent / carer,

Welcome back to the final half-term of what has been an extraordinary year! I hope you are all keeping well and are coping with this 'new normal'. We have now implemented our new timetable so your child will have received their timetable for the new academic year and will have moved up a year. This is an incredibly complex task (especially with the school closed) so my thanks go to the staff and in particular, Mr Nicholas, for achieving this on time for the June changeover as usual.

As you are aware, most of our secondary pupils will not be able to access on-site provision for the remainder of this academic year. As a staff we are still working very hard to provide the best quality online provision we can and we are looking at ways to ensure that pupils remain engaged; this is clearly going to become more challenging for some as we have had such a long time out of school. The pupils absolutely must continue to focus on their studies to maintain their progress and we will continue to work together with families to this end.

I also appreciate that many parents are beginning to return to work, making supervision more difficult. We are all having to rely more heavily on pupils' self-motivation and commitment but feedback has been mostly positive as we have tried to be as flexible as possible in what we provide. It is interesting that we have as many pupils feeling anxious about not getting through all their work as there are those who feel they have capacity for more! It is still crucial that you continue to monitor and support your child as much as possible with their online learning and please ensure that they contact their subject teacher if they have any issues or questions. If you feel that your child is not engaging, then please contact their Learning Coordinator by email in the first instance and we will do all we can to help.

In order to support learning we are also setting up a system of 'virtual mentoring'. Starting from this week, form tutors will call each member of their form by 'phone on an occasional basis to check how they are progressing in each of their subjects and to offer any support in their learning. Staff will mostly be using their own phones set to 'No Caller ID' so please look out for these calls as I feel that they will be important to keep pupils on track as the lockdown continues. We are also beginning to roll out Google Classrooms and so please look out for any communication on this.

You may also be aware that we will be running on-site provision for our new Year 11 cohort from 15th June. This will be in addition to the on-site keyworker provision we have been running since we locked down. The guidance for this was released over half-term and we are just finalising details; the social distancing restrictions, group size limitations and transport logistics are challenging but we're nearly there! Thank you to the year 11 families for responding so quickly to our request for attendance last week; that meant that we could calculate groupings etc precisely in advance so they are now finalised and ready to go. Our plan is to run a series of 3-hour mini-tutorial sessions with each subject teacher in school throughout the rest of term; further details will be provided to those families shortly.

Thank you all once again for your ongoing support. As the lockdown begins to ease I hope it is not too long before we see each other again; it is very strange running a school from a laptop and I am genuinely missing the children, as I know the rest of the staff are! Take care everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Dean Williams