**Extraordinary Report to Governors during Covid19 School Closure**

**January 2021**

This is the fifth extraordinary report issued during closures caused by the COVID19 pandemic. The previous extraordinary report was written in July 2020, at the end of the first lockdown. Since then, the school re-opened in September 2020 and governors have been kept informed through virtual meetings the work of the school in managing as Covid-safe an environment as possible while trying to keep students’ experience of school as normal as possible and for learning to continue effectively.

This report is designed to give governors an overview of current circumstances and to stand in lieu of the Standards and Performance Meeting that was due to take place on 21st January.

This report will cover:

1. Current circumstances
2. Arrangements for remote learning
3. Y11 mock results
4. Attendance – report to be sent separately.
5. **Current circumstances**

Governors will be aware that schools have been subject to frequently changing directives and guidance over the last few weeks, in addition to the frequently-changing directives schools have been subject to since March 2020.

Towards the end of the Autumn Term, there were an increasing number of infections amongst students and along with individuals self-isolating, we also had to isolate year group bubbles. It was no surprise to hear over the Christmas period that our local area had one of the highest infection rates in the country.

Community testing was made available from 11th December onwards and staff and students along with their households were advised to access Covid tests prior to Christmas and a second test prior to returning to school. Schools were charged with supporting Test and Trace for 6 days after the school term ended. Because many students were asymptomatic but then tested positive, the first part of the Christmas vacation was very busy, particularly the first 3 days prior to Tier 4 being announced. The expectation was that the family would inform the school and the school, the school would liaise with Test and Trace, identify contacts and inform those families that the student would need to self-isolate.

Further directives from the DfE were published over the Christmas holiday with regard to schools testing staff, mass testing students, and series testing Covid contacts using lateral flow tests. Training was sent out including on-line training modules that a tester must pass before delivering tests. Seven roles were prescribed with an estimate that 16 staff would be needed to run the ‘test centre’ within school.

Latterly the delayed start to the term was announced followed by the lockdown until at least half term, as well as the cancellation of the summer exams for GCSE and A Level. BTEC appeared to be an afterthought. Firstly it was announced that the BTEC exams for KS4 and KS5 scheduled for January and February would go ahead. We had arranged for students to come into school for revision sessions once we knew there would be a late start to the ter. We subsequently moved these sessions to Zoom sessions. A day later, the DfE responded to criticism that they had cancelled A Level and GCSE but not BTEC by saying that it was up to individual schools whether the exams should go ahead. Given the questionable validity of these exams if they were not being taken nationwide and the high infection rate in our area, we determined to cancel. While I am presenting tis as neutrally as I can, this particular example of the management of BTEC is indicative of the way everything has been managed. We have responded as well as we can but the toll it has taken on senior – and indeed, all staff has been considerable. Our students, too, have had a very disrupted experience.

Since then there have been daily updates, revised and re-revised requirements for remote learning and speculation about the arrangements for ensuring that exam grades can be awarded this summer. We continue to roll with the punches.

1. Arrangements for Remote Learning

We had determined until this point that our remote learning offer would be pre-recorded and we had a fortnight’s worth of pre-recorded lessons ready to go so this was delivered to all students’ inboxes before 9am on the first day of term. The requirement for remote learning has changed twice since the beginning of term with a great deal of advocacy of live lessons. I have attached the document we sent out to explain our stance. We remain convinced that live lessons are not the panacea to ensure effective remote learning and that pre-recorded lessons provide as good and probably better provision. However, many parents prefer the idea of their children doing their lessons at specific times and the potential for a level of interaction. I have attached the explanatory letter that was sent to parents setting out our approach, and also the information to parents and students about how our new remote learning offer will work, starting on Monday 18th January.

There have been a number of technical and logistical issues to resolve, as well as staff training and the work that has gone into planning for a new means of delivery. In addition, wellbeing calls are being made regularly, extended year teams have been created to support learning once the new offer goes live, Thinking Reading is moving online and lateral flow tests have been organised and are being offered to staff and to the key worker/ vulnerable students who are attending school.

1. Y11 Mock Results

Attached is an overview document of Y11 Mock results for information. Please note that the mocks were set to reflect what the students had learnt rather than whole exam papers. Because of the circumstances there is no comparison to be made that has any validity whatsoever with previous results or mocks. Y13 students have not taken mocks as they were scheduled for the beginning of February. We are currently awaiting the consultation on the way this summer’s exams will be assessed, after which further decisions will be made.

1. Attendance has been massively affected by Covid. An analysis will be sent out separately.

**Carole Herman**

**January 2021**