

19th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your families are all well and were like me, pleased to hear the positive news that the UK's Covid-19 alert level has reduced today. Whilst I'm sure we all recognise that there is a long way to go before we have put this terrible time behind us, it nonetheless provides welcome encouragement that things are slowly moving in a positive direction. I had already been planning to write to you all today to provide you with a general update on how things are going here at school, but I think this latest news story provides a useful backdrop to what I have to say – namely that whilst things feel that they are moving frustratingly slowly, they are moving, and we are going forward.

This week we have been able to have Year 10 return into school for some time with teachers. We are only allowed to have a quarter of the year group in school on any one day and so the best we can really offer them is one day on site each week. Also the initial requirements for how the students had to be grouped in "bubbles", to minimise mixing between students, has meant that normal lessons have not been possible. But it has been a start. And the feedback we have received from students and parents following their time in school has been extremely positive. Also the Department for Education's latest guidance now includes some additional flexibilities that will allow us to arrange their time in school (subject of course to strict social distancing) so they can move to work with some of their subject teachers. Whilst these are small steps, they are all part of the journey towards the normality we long for.

And this is partly why I wanted to write to you today – to give you information about a new opportunity that has opened up for students in Years 7, 8 and 9. Unfortunately the government will still not allow us to welcome more students back in school on a regular basis, however, they have now given us permission to invite students from these year groups into school for a one off meeting with their tutor or head of year. The aim of such a meeting would be to help students re-connect with the school, and for us to be able to gain a proper sense of how things have been going for them over the past few months. It would enable us to identify where things have been going well with their learning, as well as those areas where they might have struggled more, and from this to see how we can support them over the rest of the term and into the summer. Hopefully such a meeting would help the students to feel more supported and motivated knowing that we are still here for them, and strengthen that sense of belonging which is so important.

Due to the strict limits that there are on the numbers of students we can have on site at any one time, these meetings would have to be in the afternoon from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. The aim would be to invite around 4-5 students from each tutor group into school, each time their tutor is working in school, so they can meet with them and together share their experiences of how things have been going on. Within this time there would be opportunity for their tutor to look at each student's progress with the work that has been set, give them some general feedback and help to problem solve any difficulties that they might be having with their home learning. We also think that meeting with some other students from their tutor group will be important for re-establishing links with their peers.

We recognise the difficulties involved in transporting children into school for such a short period of time, in the middle of the day. If there were a different way of arranging things to make it easier we would certainly do so, but as I said earlier, we are really limited by the medical restrictions that have been put in place for all schools so as to keep students and staff safe. On that note I want to assure you that if your child were to come into school to meet up with their tutor, best practice is adhered to all times around social distancing and good hygiene – there is absolutely no compromise on this.

We hope that these meetings will begin from the week beginning 29th June. If you would like your son/daughter to take up this opportunity and be included on the lists of those coming in for these meeting, please could I ask that you complete the online form through this [LINK](#). Once we know which students are hoping to join us we will then send you further information, including proposed meeting dates. (Please note, the form needs to be completed by end of day on 23rd June.)

Just before I close, in my last letter I mentioned how an important focus for our work this half term was on reinforcing the sense of community and belonging amongst our students. As part of this we have been running numerous competitions and other extra-curricular activities for students to take part in. Hopefully you will have already seen details of many of them coming through when we have been inviting students to join in, but if not, please do ask your son/daughter about them and encourage them to get involved. Participation in all that Uffculme School has to offer has always been such a key part of what we are about, and we know that students that put the most in, are the ones that get the most out, so do take a few minutes with them helping them to find something to be part of.

You should also shortly receive a letter from Mrs Poortman (Assistant Headteacher – Curriculum) telling you about the Review Week that is taking place in a couple of weeks' time for all students, and also the Summer Awards that teachers will be making to acknowledge all those students that have been making exceptional efforts through this time. Please do look out for this letter so that you are in the loop with regards these important arrangements.

Finally, I want to close with a 'Thank You' to all of you for your continued support for the school, and everything that you have been doing to help and encourage your children through these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



A R Blackburn (Mr)
Headteacher