

Brine Leas School

Headteacher's Newsletter



8th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a challenging week to keep up with all the developments regarding the national and regional situation regarding COVID-19. At present, we are still working on a partial phased reopening for Years 10 and 12 from the 15th June, with no more than one quarter of those students on site at any one time. This is in direct obedience of the national guidance issued nearly two weeks ago. These plans have been approved by the Academy Trust and the Local Governing Board.

The local situation is such that many Local Authorities in the North West have already declared that no students will return to school before 22nd June at the earliest due to their Directors of Public Health making a risk assessment on the most recent rate of infection, R. Our Local Authority (Cheshire East) are expected to make an announcement on this in the first half of next week. If they determine a later phased opening date than the 15th June, then we will follow their guidance and suggested dates. This situation is very dynamic, and I will update you as soon after a decision is made as possible.

I've sub-divided the information for each cohort to make it easier to navigate, but please don't feel the need to read outside of your son/daughter's year group unless you specifically want to.

YEAR 6 STUDENTS

Year 6 students will not be allowed into their secondary schools before the end of the summer term as per the guidance from the Department of Education. This means that transition must be done in a very different way than before. Many schools, ours included, will be doing virtual transition days and assemblies to their incoming students from Year 6 and we will be contacting those families this week with our plans. I am delighted to announce that Mr Mottram, who some of you may already know, will be leading our Transition from Year 6 to 7 next year. He will become a familiar face to Year 6 students and parents over the course of next year.

YEARS 7, 8 AND 9 STUDENTS

Years 7, 8 and 9 will most likely not be returning to school before the end of the summer term and therefore remote learning will continue for them for the foreseeable future. For Brine Leas, this is now mostly based around Microsoft Teams and is supplemented by the opportunity to talk to a teacher directly on Zoom clinics. Teams also allow students to communicate with their teacher and submit work, as well as giving us the platform to upload some lessons for each subject, which is now taking place. We have already communicated information about the expectations on students from the school which is also on the website.

YEAR 10 STUDENTS

Year 10 will hopefully return to school on the 15th June, but this is currently for one day per week as per the official guidance. It is entirely down to parent choice to accept the invite to attend when it is sent out later this week. Students cannot turn up on any other day, than that offered. Some teaching, pastoral support, wellbeing and remote learning support will be offered in these sessions, but as you would expect it will be a very different school that students return to. There will be many limitations on entry to the site and movement around the site. Hygiene standards will be high and in line with national guidance. Lunches and breaks will be very limited in operation

and style. While we await the guidance from the Local Authority and Government on this date, we continue to plan for it and will be in touch midweek with details of the sessions and expectations. Year 10s will therefore also continue to have remote learning for the near future, but hopefully blended with some in school sessions. For Brine Leas, this is now mostly based around Microsoft Teams and is supplemented by the opportunity to talk to a teacher directly on Zoom clinics. Teams also allow students to communicate with their teacher and submit work, as well as giving us the platform to upload some lessons for each subject, which is now taking place. We have already communicated information about the expectations on students from the school which is also on the website.

YEAR 11 STUDENTS

We are still supporting anyone in Year 11, regardless of their intended destination. Our transition materials for those intending on progressing into the sixth form have been shared with all of our Year 11 students as it may help those that have chosen to go elsewhere next academic year. There is information on the website and some shared by email, explaining our offer and for any that are unsure about their chosen destination or have changed their mind and now want to look at BL6, then they should contact the school/sixth form for advice. We look forward to welcoming next year's Year 12 as soon as we can. The centre assessed grades that we have to do in the absence of public examinations have been completed or are about to be so (each examination board has different deadlines).

YEAR 12 STUDENTS

Year 12 will hopefully return to school on the 15th June, but this is currently for one meeting with a teacher per fortnight as per the official guidance. It is entirely down to student/parent choice to accept the invite to attend when it is sent out later this week. Students cannot turn up on any other day, than that offered. Pastoral support, wellbeing and remote learning support will be offered in these sessions, but as you would expect it will be a very different site that students return to. There will be many limitations on entry to the site and movement around the site. Hygiene standards will be high and in line with national guidance. While we await the guidance from the Local Authority and Government on this date, we continue to plan for it and will be in touch midweek with details of the sessions and expectations if we are able to do so. If the plan has changed we will update you accordingly. Year 12s will therefore also continue to have remote learning for the near future, but hopefully blended with some in school sessions. For Brine Leas, this is now mostly based around Microsoft Teams and is supplemented by the opportunity to talk to a teacher directly on Zoom clinics. Teams also allow students to communicate with their teacher and submit work, as well as giving us the platform to upload some lessons for each subject, which is now taking place. We have already communicated information about the expectations on students from the school which is also on the website.

YEAR 13 STUDENTS

We are still supporting anyone in Year 13, regardless of their intended destination. Our transition materials for those intending on progressing into Higher Education have been shared and are available on the website. There is information on the website and some shared by email, explaining our offer and for any that are unsure about their chosen destination or have changed their mind they should contact the school/sixth form for advice. The centre assessed grades that we have to do in the absence of public examinations have been completed or are about to be so (each examination board has different deadlines).

VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND THE CHILDREN OF CRITICAL WORKERS

We continue to provide supervision and support with remote learning activities for these students, as we have done since the school closed. Some parents have asked if their child can return to school as they believe themselves to be a Critical Worker. The guidance on eligibility can be found [here](#) and it may be necessary for those who think they are eligible to provide a letter from their employer, confirming how their job is necessary for the undertaking of the critical work as described in the guidance. Vulnerable students are defined as those with an Education and Health

Care Plan or those with formal engagement with a named social worker (i.e. those classed at Child In Need or Child Protection) and they continue to be eligible for inclusion in this provision regardless of their age. In either of these two circumstances, please contact the school on info@brineleas.co.uk if you are unsure.

I need to let you know what the latest outlook is for school from September 2020 onwards. While much of this information is based on guidance that hasn't yet been published or risk assessments and plans that work on the latest guidance it is potentially subject to considerable change. Based on this, I thought it was worthwhile sharing that latest thinking with you, but it these are as yet unconfirmed.

It is clear that there will be some adjustments to the dates, styles or content of the GCSE and A Level examinations next summer. There is much speculation in the press and debate in the Department for Education about this, but there are currently no confirmed plans. It is also highly unlikely that unless there is a vaccine and/or a dramatic change in the guidance from the Government, that school will return to normal in September. It would seem that it is most likely that there will be a mixture of in school sessions and remote learning for a number of months, but like you, I hope this isn't for an extended period of time.

When the school starts its phased reopening, it will not be possible to have any visitors on site, including parents, with the exception of those external agencies that work with children and young people such as Social Services and NHS staff. This will therefore mean that the school reception is unavailable in person, but you can still contact the school via telephone during normal school hours or by email. It may take longer to get a response than in normal circumstances due to changes in staffing and working patterns brought about by current Government guidance for staff. Some of you have asked for meeting appointments with either myself or members of the Senior Leadership Team in the past couple of weeks. While it may be possible for you to get a response by email or telephone from one of the members of my team, it will be highly unlikely that they will have the capacity to meet you online or face to face. Managing the school as it is currently operating, combined with planning for the phased reopening with all of the restrictions currently in place, is consuming considerably more of my time than running the school normally does. I usually say yes to every request for a meeting with parents or direct it to an appropriate member of my team. For the foreseeable future, I will be unable to meet parents online or face to face, but we will all do our best to respond to all enquiries in as timely a manner as possible. Please continue to communicate to one of the main school email addresses, such as info@brineleas.co.uk as individual members of staff may not be available to respond.

While I know that for many of you, including both myself and my staff, the current situation is disappointing, the situation is beyond our control and we are working hard to support all of our children in the best way we can achieve. I eagerly await the day that school returns to normal, but this is a considerable amount of time in the future based on the latest, but unconfirmed, information. Residentials and trips for the next academic year have already been cancelled by many providers and hosts and it would seem that this, or alternatives, will be indicative of many of the activities that we normally provide outside of the classroom throughout the next academic year, including results days, open evenings/days, parents evenings and school performances.

I hope that you continue to stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely,



David Cole
Headteacher

Alternative link for guidance on children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

