



23 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update 23 June 2020 Covid-19

I am writing to thank you for your continued support and to say your words of encouragement are very much appreciated as we continue to navigate our way through these uncharted waters, especially when it feels the tide is against us and the course we set sail on changes.

Wider reopening

On Monday 15 June 2020 I held a series of meetings/training sessions for members of staff to go through the detail of the arrangements for wider reopening including the implementation of safety measures. The sessions were well attended and as always, our members of staff were very supportive of the arrangements and keen to do as much as they possibly can to be back and help our pupils.

Last week was our first week of wider reopening to pupils in Years 10 and 12. As we expected, some pupils were reluctant to return but many were very pleased to be back in the classroom and working with teachers. The attendance on each day varied between seventy percent and seventy-five percent of those pupils we expected to be in. The response from pupils was that things went smoothly and that the sessions were beneficial. We are expecting similar numbers in school this week – as was the case yesterday and today.

We are looking forward to even more Year 10 pupils returning next week as we offer face to face sessions for each of their option subjects.

The Yellow Bus service will not be running from 25 June 2020. The full Yellow Bus service will be reinstated from September 2020.

Free School Meals and the National Voucher Scheme

I have previously written:

“the DfE have changed the guidance on the national voucher scheme; even though the voucher scheme is being scaled back, we will continue to provide food parcels. The significant change is that we will not be able to provide food parcels and for families to also receive vouchers. There will be a ParentMail message going out to parents/carers asking whether considering the future stoppage of the vouchers, parents/carers would wish to receive a food parcel.”

The guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

“As schools open more widely, and their kitchens reopen, we expect schools to make food parcels available for collection or delivery for any children that are eligible for free school meals who are staying at home.”

The government guidance for businesses states:

“Providing packaged meals or similar to avoid opening staff canteens, where possible.”

I appreciate that the decision made by government to phase out use of the national voucher scheme may cause difficulties for some families; we will continue to provide food parcels not only for our pupils and those eligible for Free School Meals but for all pupils and their families who may be experiencing difficulties during this time – please contact school by email if you or any other family associated with our school, requires our support enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk

Consideration of examinations in Years 10 and 12

It would appear that the Government are keen to have examinations in place for next year and run them as usual; as I wrote on 12 June 2020 I hope that someone in the DfE with knowledge and experience of working in schools will influence the decision about examinations for the benefit of pupil wellbeing – a possible model would similar to this year regarding Teacher Assessment in line with subject and school trends which could be supported by an examination on the content that can be expected to be covered in-depth in the time remaining before examinations.

My concern now that the Government have announced two models of financial support for a national tutoring programme to help pupils be “examination ready”, is the pressure that this puts on pupils to re-cover work for the four months of the summer term alongside new curriculum content in the next academic year. In addition, an announcement has been made that the Government are to consult with Ofqual on the possibility of delaying the examination series to June and July (it usually covers May and the first part of June). I intend to continue with publishing the letters from Faculty and Subject Leaders to ensure we make our case for providing an effective alternative to assessment and reducing the workload and pressure on pupils. The funding it would appear is aimed at targeted groups of pupils and specific projects.

The guidance issued by the DfE was published on Friday 19 June 2020 and further guidance has been issued on 22 June 2020. The guidance on Friday states that the funding package includes:

- a one-off grant shared across state funded primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year to support pupils, recognising that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, regardless of their income or background.
- a National Tutoring Programme to increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020/21 academic year

The guidance issued on Monday 22 June 2020 states that they are discontinuing the Year 7 Catch Up programme which provides funding to support all Year 7 pupils with low on entry levels of English and Maths. We have successfully used this funding over the last three years to support our Literacy and Numeracy lessons in the Year 7 curriculum as well as provide a one to one reading programme, which for many pupils has resulted in a twenty-four month gain in reading age which supports access to understanding curriculum content. The funding for the Year 7 Catch Up programme has now been diverted to support the national programme aimed primarily at Years 10 and 12. We will continue to support our Year 7 pupils with these much-needed intervention and support programmes but without the direct funding from Government.

Phased school opening

I have met with our members of staff and last night we held a remote meeting of our Full Board of Governors and I explained that we are working through phases of school opening:

School before enforced closure	Education during enforced closure	Wider reopening of school to years 10 and 12	Last week of term	Late July and August phase	Autumn term phase
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--	-------------------	----------------------------	-------------------

The guidance from the DfE changes on a very regular basis and keeps creating uncertainty about what should be expected of Headteachers to provide education. Therefore, to consider current practice in phases helps to manage expectations and focus on the effectiveness of a current plan. The advice and guidance have never been clear about what a coherent response for all secondary schools should look like – it has very much been the case that Headteachers have had to work out for themselves and their schools how each expectation should be formed into a workable solution. The advice and guidance currently states, schools that usually have summer camps can continue to plan for these within the guidance of social distancing and that the support programmes as mentioned previously will become operational from September. No guidance yet has been given on what the expectation is for schools being fully or partially operational for September other than the announcement today that school pupils should return in September – the basis on which this return should be made has not been explained.

Transition - Last week of term and results days

The Government have previously announced that they would like all pupils to be back in school before the summer break. However, consideration has not been given as to how this is possible even if the social distancing rule is relaxed to 1+ metres; like all other schools, we will not have enough classrooms in our building to accommodate all pupils at the same time with a 1+ metre distance between pupils sat in a classroom. There are many other considerations to be made such as – how does a teacher and support assistant interact with a pupil who needs help with their work?; how does a school provide lunch for one thousand five hundred pupils and at the same time provide social distancing is in place even on a reduction of distance? – staggered lunches would need to begin around 11.30am and finish at 2.00pm; how does a school ensure regular handwashing of all pupils in school, with limited numbers of sinks and difficulty in supply chains of antibacterial hand sanitiser? So far, we have found solutions to the problems we have been presented with in the wider reopening of school to Years 10 and 12 alongside the growing number of pupils whose parents/carers are key workers and for those pupils vulnerable and with an EHCP.

We are considering the support we can provide Year 11 and Year 13 pupils before we finish for the summer and I will be writing again soon with detail of a plan for face to face meetings with key members of staff for an in-school welfare check and support with next steps. Any pupil who would like further support in considering their future pathways can contact Helen Mountain, Careers Advisor on mou@fitussaltschool.co.uk. In addition, there are several teams in school looking at how we can host Results Days in August, but we await further guidance from the DfE; if none is published, we will make arrangements and contact you again before the end of term.

Our plans for Year 6 to Year 7 Transition include an online virtual tour and presentation in which some key members of staff introduce themselves to our new Year 7 pupils. This is in the process of editing and should be published early next week. We have had a number of our new Year 7 pupils in school, having a limited tour and meeting some key members of staff to support them; we are still considering how we will have a Year 6 into Year 7 Transition Day either before the end of term or at the beginning of the new term. We want to make sure that our new Year 7 pupils feel comfortable as members of our school community and feel settled before all other year groups return.

Other key points

1. Further to schools receiving notice of the access to IT devices scheme the Local Authority is still working through their plan of distribution and we have not yet, been notified of our allocation.
2. The number of Safeguarding cases remains low and as previously, if parents/carers have any safeguarding concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us on

enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk and one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads will be able to deal with the case

3. We continue to recruit for the few vacancies we have had, over the next couple of weeks we will be recruiting for a maternity cover and for Learning Support Assistants so that we will have a full complement of members of staff for the new term.

As I have previously written, if any parent/carer has any concerns and who does not already have a contact with someone in school, please contact the school on:

enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk

As I receive any further information, I will keep you updated. As is always the case, the situation is changing on a regular basis and making sense of the many documents of advice and guidance is challenging.

Once again, many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morrel', written in a cursive style.

Ian Morrel
Headteacher