

WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

An Academy Grammar School
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21st December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The challenges of providing education during the pandemic have been very apparent. In recent weeks, increasing numbers of students and staff have been required to self-isolate. Although we have been able to provide access to remote learning for all students at all times, disruption in the continuity of learning has been very evident.

This afternoon, I met with the Headteachers of the three other Grammar Schools in Southend and a senior representative of the Local Authority. Our purpose was to plan for the start of the new term in circumstances where infection rates are high, and rising, and the local Public Health team has advised us that "extensive restrictions are necessary".

We want to provide as much assurance as possible to parents and students, by indicating with ample notice our common proposals for the Spring Term.

We agreed that it was our responsibility to minimise the risk of infection and transmission; our duty to maximise the opportunities for learning in the classroom; our goal to minimise disruption; and our priority to meet the needs of those with external examinations ahead.

We also recognise the importance of sustaining an on-site offer for all the children of 'critical-workers' and those identified as 'vulnerable'. Our premises will be open every school day for this cohort. Parents should confirm their attendance for each week in advance with an email to generalenquiries@whsg.info by the previous Thursday.

In light of the Tier 4 restrictions and the need to minimise social contact in the period immediately after Christmas and the New Year: our schools will be providing remote learning for all year groups in the first week of term (from January 4th). There will be no lessons in school.

In the second week of term, starting Monday 11th January, only Years 11 and 13 will be accommodated in school, in line with their normal timetable for that week. All other year groups will continue to work from home, with remote learning provided.

As a result of this decision, the Year 13 PPEs will be delayed by one week but still follow the same schedule, ie those planned for January 4th will now take place on January 11th.

From Monday 18th January, we will make on-site provision for as many year groups as is practically possible, having reviewed the public health information. Parents will be advised as soon as this decision has been made: we fully appreciate the benefit of having as much notice as possible.

Although no decision has yet been made, we are also reviewing whether providing a week of remote learning immediately after half-term for all year groups might provide for a necessary 'fire break' to limit the extent to which any viral infection can take hold in our schools. We are hoping that this will not be the case.

The information in this letter is, of course, being shared with our staff, so that teachers and others involved in the direct delivery of education can begin to plan provision as best as is possible.



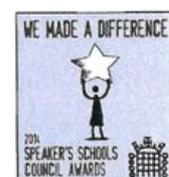
Science



Engineering



Southend-on-Sea



We will be encouraging all our staff to be tested, at one of the many facilities provided by Public Health, in good time before returning to the classroom. It is unlikely that the extensive provision of on-site 'mass testing', as envisaged by the Department for Education, will have been established in the early weeks of January.

We are expecting all students, with their families, to do the same: to ensure you have all been tested in the week before returning to school, even if you have no symptoms.

The only exception is for those who have had a positive test in the previous 12 weeks, as it may give an incorrect positive result.

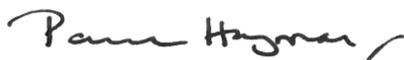
I hope this letter provides you all with a sufficiently clear indication of our plans for the new term. A further Headteachers' review meeting is scheduled for the first week in January and we will write again, as soon as there is anything further to communicate.

Further Changes

Please ensure you continue to look for any revised information that may need to be sent out during this Christmas break.

Keep safe!

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Hayman" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Paul Hayman
Headteacher