

Weekly News Update Friday 18 June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

As suspected the Government announced a delay to the full easing of restrictions, however we continue to offer our full curriculum and adapt our offer with the ever changing guidance. Currently the restrictions look to be lifted for the last four days of term, however the Local Authority have asked that we keep all mitigations in place until the end of term. Students will be aware much of our travel to different buildings is outside, rather than in internal corridors, and we have also become accustomed to our one-way system. In the classrooms we continue to ventilate as much as possible and when it hasn't been raining more lessons are taking place in our outdoor teaching spaces. Students can of course wear a face covering if they wish and we continue to review our systems and practices on a week-by-week basis in line with the current government guidance.

Other changes will unfortunately impact taster days, which can no longer operate in person, and we cannot have our usual primary school transition. I know Mr Ward will write to all families of Year 6s starting in September early next week to discuss a virtual meeting. He will also remind them of our summer school which is a great opportunity for the Year 6s to get to know the school.

The DfE have confirmed they will continue to provide funding for the extra school bus services until the end of term owing to the restrictions which are still in operation.

Throughout this last academic year I have been so impressed with not only the students' resilience, but also their ability to adapt to the new ways of working. We are continuing to offer our extra-curricular programme, virtual dance and music performances, together with our sports week (in year groups) and virtual work experience. Over the last year we planned so many activities, only to have them pulled at the last minute, however, I am really proud of the tenacity of colleagues and students who are trying to make the best of some very challenging times.

Rapid lateral flow testing

The government continues to encourage all households with primary and secondary school and college-aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles, to do regular twice-weekly rapid lateral flow testing. More test kits should have been provided through tutors this week. We know that parents/carers are supporting schools and taking PCR tests if students have symptoms. Please could you also contact the school if your child develops chicken pox, measles or shingles as we have some students and colleagues for whom this would present a serious health & safety risk.

Postponement of all taster days

As mentioned above, following the Government's announcement of a four-week delay in the Covid roadmap, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) released guidance yesterday stating that all transition events in the city should not go ahead this term. As a result of this announcement, unfortunately all schools are having to postpone Taster Days planned for July. We are really disappointed about this, but it is clear that we need to comply with this guidance.

All Year 10s will now be in school, rather than attending the Varndean/Bhasvic days. As this is an exceptional time for everyone, both Varndean College and BHASVIC have taken the joint decision to offer a Sixth Form Experience Day in the Autumn term instead and they will be liaising with us about the best date for this and ensuring that there will be enough places

for all existing Year 10 applicants to spend a day with one of the two colleges. They will be sending out emails to all Year 10 applicants later today.

In the meantime, they will be offering Year 10 students the chance to find out more about the courses virtually instead and in early July will be sending applicants a link to all the Year 10 subject videos so that they can watch these over the summer, together with the general Year 10 Day video and a copy of the Year 10 Guide which they would have received at the Taster Day.

The Future of Secondary School Places in Brighton and Hove - BHCC Consultation 21 June to 18 July

At a recent meeting of Brighton & Hove City Council's Children and Young People and Skills Committee (CYPS) a motion was passed to undertake a pre-consultation engagement activity to look at admission arrangements for the city's secondary schools. The Local Authority projections are that the number of children due to start secondary school within Brighton & Hove are forecast to drop significantly over the next 10 years.

The council wants to understand what residents think are the key areas to consider when reviewing ways to address the impact of fewer children needing secondary school places in the city.

The LA will also consult with schools, however I would urge you, our parents and carers, to have your say on this very important matter as the council can look to change both the pupil admission numbers (PAN) for the school and the catchment areas. Dorothy Stringer School would want to maintain our current PAN and not alter our current numbers. However it is important for the community to have their say when the survey starts next week.

The pre-consultation engagement survey will go live next week, between 21 June and 18 July 2021. The survey will be hosted on the council's [Have Your Say](#) portal. There will also be 8 public events held remotely. Verbal responses can also be taken into account on 01273 293653.

You can read the CYPS Agenda item here: [The Future of Secondary School Places in Brighton and Hove](#)

Prefect Applications

Students who have applied to be prefects will have been told this week if they have been successful. We are now able to open applications for those prefects who would like to take on even more responsibility and represent the school as a head student or senior prefect. The application form for this is available from the Year 10 notices page and an email link has been sent to students' school email account. The deadline for submitting an application is Friday 2 July.

A safe summer in Blakers and Preston Park

Community safety in our parks is important for everyone, young and old, especially at a time when we value our outdoor green spaces more than ever. In Preston Park Ward we have two great parks and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who keep an eye on activity to minimise antisocial behaviour and crime.

Our community can help make this summer a safe one by doing one simple thing – report anything you see to Sussex Police so that they can get a clear picture of what is happening in our parks and take appropriate action based on the facts.

Call 999 if there is a crime in progress or there is imminent danger

Call 101 if a crime has finished or antisocial behaviour is taking place. We are helping to spread the word as part of **REPORT IT**, a local grassroots campaign led by the newly formed Preston Park and Fiveways Local Action Team (PPFLAT).

Local Action Teams are resident-led and focus on community priorities in specific areas. PPFLAT provides the space for local residents, organisations, businesses and groups in Preston Park Ward to join the dots and collaborate on projects around local community issues. To find out more or take part, drop a line to ppflat1@gmail.com

Safeguarding Support – Online access

To support our Gaming4Good campaign in June we are very excited to share details of a series of webinars that we are hosting for parents and carers to highlight key issues surrounding gaming and how they can ensure their children are Gaming4Good.

Online gaming has seen a massive increase in popularity with children over the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of more time spent at home and restrictions on physical social contact. The community is very welcome to join one of the free Gaming4Good webinars where they can hear from a panel of experts in family gaming who will discuss psychology, gaming risk and finance, how to approach your child's gaming to help them get the most out of it... and avoid the pitfalls. There will also be a Q&A session.

There are three one-hour webinars, each tailored for parents/carers of children of different age groups. <https://www.getsafeonline.org/gaming4good-webinar-registration/>

Thursday June 17, 10am – 11am: parents and carers with children 2–12 yrs

Thursday June 24, 10am – 11am: parents and carers with children aged 12–15yrs

Wednesday June 30, 10am-11am: parents and carers with children aged 15–18yrs

All the information on the inspiring list of panellists can also be found on the website:

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/gaming4good-webinars/>

Word of the week: 21 June – Altruistic (adj) showing a disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish, e.g., "it was an entirely altruistic act"

Key Dates for your diary:

24 June – Year 10 internal exams

25 June – Virtual Dance Show

2 July – Remote work experience day – Year 10

10 July – Music Summer Showcase

15 July – Year 10 Parents' Evening - (Remote)

22 July – End of summer term – early closure at 12.30

12 August – GCSE results

Take care and stay safe.

Matt Hillier