



# MAIDEN ERLEGH

## SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr P. Gibson

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Dear Parent/Guardian

### Headteacher Update

I felt it an opportune time to write and update you on the current situation with #TeamMaidenErlegh.

This week has seen us reopen our doors to more students as we welcome back Year 10 and Year 12 on to the school site. This is an exciting time for the school, and whilst significant caution has been taken to ensure the process is safe for everyone, it is great to start seeing students walk back through the school gates. Even though this is designed to supplement online learning, there is no doubt that this will benefit these year groups who face GCSE and A Level examinations next summer. We are currently limited to only having 25% of the cohort in school at any one time, and the 2m social distancing rule obviously caps the amount of lessons we can deliver, but nevertheless this is hopefully a huge step forwards on the road back to normality.

I also want to highlight that many announcements made by Government are often received by schools at the same time, and that the amount of information provided is also in the same detail as that available to the public. Therefore, I want to reassure you that as soon as we receive further clarity of any announcements, such as the summer learning programme, we will write to inform you of our position and I appreciate the patience you are showing in these continuing difficult times.

Below, I want to update you on a number of areas which may be of interest to you.

#### Quality of Engagement and Work

I have been regularly shown superb pieces of work which have been submitted by the students and I am incredibly proud of the resilience and determination that many of them are showing. I know firsthand the difficulties of home schooling and I would also like to thank parents for keeping your children on track and supporting us when we have flagged any concerns. I am hoping that we will all return to school soon and normality can resume so we can all get back to doing what we do best – this week sees the first footsteps on that journey, in my opinion.

#### Trust Work

On the point of 'Summer Catch Up', as a Trust we have assigned working groups to plan ahead for September to ensure that we are ready for whatever position schools are in. These working groups are focussed around three key areas:

-Wellbeing

-Curriculum – including a 'recovery curriculum to ensure students have not lost out in this period'

-Blended learning – looking at how a mix of online and face to face teaching can have maximum impact in case normality does not return in September

I am hoping that the final one is something that will enhance learning rather than be a necessity, but all of the Headteachers across the Trust believe that we should plan for the eventuality of schools not being fully open so that the learning of our students does not suffer.

#### Student Reports

I have had a few queries from parents regarding information on the progress of their child and whether parents and students will receive reports in the summer term. The Department for Education has advised schools to not collect any further data and we will be following this guidance. However, we have started to review our 20/21 calendar and we are bringing the date of Data Collection Points (DCP) for each year group forward. This will allow teachers to assess students more holistically and give you a clearer indication of the progress they have made earlier in the year than normal. Where we do have concerns we are already making contact with parents.

#### Black Lives Matter

We are appalled by the incident in which George Floyd sadly lost his life. As a school we are committed to stopping racism and believe in equality for all. Our focus as a school of Opportunity, Diversity and Success For All resonates throughout all that we do, but that does not mean that we should not strive for improvement and we will continue to look for ways to improve the experience at Maiden Erlegh and beyond for all of our students. Last week saw students receive a PSHE lesson on this topic but we feel that there is much more that can be done, and over the coming months this will be looked at from both a school and Trust perspective to ensure that we can help create

positive systemic change. Miss Davies will be writing to you all separately to outline what all schools will be doing in the Trust over the coming year and beyond.

### **Live Information Session and Q&A with the Head**

I am also aware that many of you will have questions about the remainder of this year and next year, and as a result I will be hosting a series of live parents' meetings. These will be in groups of 50 to allow the chance for interaction, will be approximately 30 minutes each and will be year group specific. I am afraid not every parent will have the opportunity to attend these as I will be hosting a maximum of 4 for each year group and places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. We will create a FAQ sheet for parents. More information will follow on these events.

### **Some Calendar Changes**

I want to also highlight some calendar changes to you. The first is the INSET day scheduled for July, which will now move a day earlier to Wednesday 1 July. Many of you may ask why we are having an INSET day in the current climate. Staff at the school are working harder than they have ever done before, and to allow time to prepare for September, I need to bring the staff body together to focus on these plans. The date has been changed to take into account our Year 10 timetable which doesn't have lessons on a Wednesday and there are also less Year 12 lessons on that day. The Pop-Up School will have a slightly different provision which Mrs Bendall will write to those impacted separately.

In addition, students (Government decision pending) are due to return to school on Thursday 3 September. This date is being moved to Friday 4 September to allow us to have transition days for the new Year 7 and Year 12 students. I am sure you will appreciate that the step up from primary to secondary school is big change and it would be unfair for them not to have some form of transition before other students arrive. This is normally done in the summer term when the site is quieter but we have been told categorically that we can only allow Year 10 and 12 plus those in our Pop-Up provision on to site for educational purposes.

### **Trip Refunds**

This process is ongoing and we have refunded many of the trips planned so far, but as you can imagine it is not a quick process with travel companies working their way through their bookings in chronological order. In addition, we are working with our insurer to ensure that where there are issues in obtaining refunds from the company we are receiving money from them. Once the money is available for a trip, this is being returned to parents via ParentPay. I appreciate your patience on this matter.

### **Methods of Teaching**

We are constantly reviewing the ways in which we are delivering online learning to students and I have received a lot of positive comments about the changes that have occurred since May half term. Other methods of delivery that staff have been trained up on and you may see more evidence of in the near future include:

- Mote – this allows staff to give in depth verbal feedback to students on their work which has helped many understand misconceptions and how to improve their work.
- QR code worksheets – training has been given on how to use QR codes to create voiced over worksheets.
- Zoom – we are seeing an increase in staff carrying out online lessons (please note this is not compulsory)
- Loom – this allows staff to easily voice over PowerPoints for students to learn from and more importantly go back over if they are unsure of anything.

### **Immunisations**

As a result of our commitment to our students' health we have been working with the Berkshire NHS Trust to ensure that the final HPV2 vaccination can go ahead for our Year 9 girls. These will start this week on an appointment basis only and will be done in an area of school where social distancing can occur and no 'social bubbles' will be impacted.

### **Installation of Electric Gates**

Over the course of the past few weeks the site has been having a lot of work done, including P Block refurbishment, Science corridor refurbishment and painting across the site. However, the most significant upgrade is the installation of electric gates which will make the school a closed site. This is a fantastic addition to safeguard our students and we have been working closely with our neighbours at Aldryngton and the Silverdale Centre to ensure the new arrangements can work for them. Timings for the closing and opening of the gates will be sent to you in due course and to reassure sixth formers, they will have the opportunity to use their cards to enter and exit site as normal.

### **Staffing next year**

Finally I wanted to inform you about some changes to staffing that will be occurring from September here at the school.

#### **Internal changes:**

- Mrs Bhadye has been promoted to Assistant Headteacher and will be responsible for the Maths Department. She will also be our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Mr Bell has been given a 1 year Assistant Headteacher secondment. (Replacement to be appointed.)
- Miss Grindey will be Head of Year 10 from September 2020.
- Mrs Bell has been promoted to the position of Head of Science.
- Mrs Garner will work alongside Mrs Hill as Co-Head of Year 12.
- Mr Whorriskey will be Head of Bolt House from September.
- Mrs Biddle will take the position of House Co-Ordinator from September.
- Ms Pravda will become the Looked After Children Keyworker.

#### Staff joining us

- Miss O'Brien and Mrs Corke will be joining us as English teachers in September. Miss O'Brien is currently Head of English at Brakenhale School and Mrs Corke has worked with us before.
- Mrs Gibson joins our Science Department from 1 July following a year of training to be a Chemistry teacher with us.
- Miss Longden also joins us on 1 July in the Maths Department following successful completion a of teacher training course with us.
- Miss Avery joins us in PE and Psychology.
- We would also like to welcome back Mrs Amankwah from maternity leave who returns to our Maths Department.

#### Staff leaving us

We are losing some colleagues this summer, some of whom have been with us for a number years:

- Mr D'Cruz is leaving his role as Head of Science and taking up a role as a Science Teacher at another school.
- Mr Gomm is stepping back from his teaching role but will continue to support UCAS applications and IT support whilst retaining his role as the Trust DPO.
- Mr Barr will be leaving the English Department for pastures new.
- Mr Thomas, our cover supervisor, will be leaving us (for 6 weeks) then re-joining us as a trainee Music teacher in September.
- Mr Buck is not leaving us but will be carrying out more work on the Teaching School to ensure we get the very best from this wonderful scheme.
- Miss Norman will also sadly be leaving us at the end of the summer term.
- Mrs Inns is leaving us to work abroad. We wish her the best of luck.

We obviously wish those leaving us the very best for the future and welcome those joining #TeamMaidenErlegh with open arms. This time of year always sees a lot of movement in staffing for September but considering the size of our school, this number is very small and in my opinion shows what a wonderful place Maiden Erlegh School is and how fantastic the students are to work with.

I will continue to update you on the current situation but should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office.

Stay safe, stay well and let's keep working together to get through this crisis.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Gibson  
Headteacher