



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr Martin Brown

Compassion
Achievement
Respect
Endeavour

*The cornerstones of our
learning community*

15th May 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

I hope you are well and continuing to manage at this time. I am writing this at the end of a week of further change. The government's briefing on Sunday night was followed by more detailed information on Monday about wider changes to our current situation and, specifically, proposed changes to schools. We welcome the gradual easing of restrictions recognising the huge sacrifice many have made to date. We have first-hand knowledge of how 'lockdown' has affected students and their families, it has been a difficult experience for everyone, some families have, in the midst of it, experienced great challenges.

Government guidance for secondary schools informed us about providing 'some face to face contact with year 10 and year 12 pupils' from 1st June. The guidance went on to state that this will not be a return to full timetables or for students to be back in school full time. The contact we provide is intended to supplement students' online learning.

Those of you with children in Year 7, 8 and 9 will interpret this as no return to school for your children until September. I do not know if further guidance will emerge but we recognise this is a strong possibility. I appreciate there will be very mixed emotions about this, your obvious concern for your children's health and well-being is balanced with a concern about their education. We appreciate this means that we must continue to review and refine our online learning programme. A number of parents have written to me praising aspects of what we do, we must capture best practice and aim to replicate that across the school.

As you are aware we are holding a 'consolidation day' on Monday 18th May. This provides time for your sons/daughters to catch up on incomplete work or undertake an enrichment task we will share. Staff will be engaged in strategic planning on this day; some of this time will be spent refining our online learning programme and further developing resources; some of their time will also be spent on planning for September and adjusting our programmes of study to take account of this significant change we are experiencing.

Members of the senior leadership team will be in school planning for some sort of return for year 10 and year 12 students. I am sure you are aware there is some controversy regarding the timing of the return, union leaders are meeting with government medical advisers today to hopefully provide clarity over what a safe return could entail.

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My priority must be about the safety and well-being of the entire school community. I recognise that decisions we make and steps we take have the potential to put some individuals at significant risk. Serious illness is devastating for individuals and their loved ones. We have a number of vulnerable staff and students who must be protected. I want to assure you all that we have the very best of intentions, we want our students back at school where we know they prosper both educationally and personally. We must therefore take appropriate steps to manage this safely, many parents will be anxious about their children returning and will need reassurance.

A return for Year 10 and Year 12 students is therefore very likely to be phased. We will identify students considered vulnerable and those who have struggled the most as our first priority, after that we will be considering how to best ensure that others are supported through face to face contact to help them make the best possible progress in the remaining weeks of this academic year. More detailed plans will be shared in due course.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support at this time. There is no blue print for how to manage at this time, schools are struggling to adjust, at pace, to these unprecedented demands. We are working closely with our colleagues and with the support of West Sussex to ensure that there is some coherency and consistency to what all schools are doing. We are working particularly closely with Sackville School to ensure that together we support our community.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Brown

Headteacher