

12th May 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope this letter continues to find your family and yourself safe and well. Following on from the government’s announcement on Sunday evening and further details released yesterday I wanted to update you regarding the situation at Brymore as soon as possible.

Firstly, I am unable at this time to give you exactly what is going to happen after half term as there is still a huge amount of planning to be done. However, I thought it was important to let you know now what we do know will and will not happen so that you can start planning accordingly. I hope to then provide further details later this week.

I have always believed in openness and transparency with parents and I will continue with that approach now. My over-riding driver will continue to be to put the health and wellbeing of the boys and my staff first. At Brymore I will not have boys back at school unless I can reasonably expect to ensure this. The immediate challenges include up to a third of my teaching staff who will be unable to return as they need shielding or are vulnerable. I have vastly reduced teams in cleaning, matrons and site maintenance and some staff have school aged children who will continue to be educated at home. In addition, there has been no government guidance on boarding whatsoever. With this in mind we are currently planning for the following:

1. Year’s 7-9 will not return before the summer holidays and will continue to be set work using SMHW.
2. We will endeavour to put a meaningful timetable together for Year 10 that will likely be a combination of working from home using TEAMS (which has been very successful so far) and actually attending lessons in school. Individuals will not be in every day or for full days.
3. We will continue our clear approach to teaching vulnerable students. We will accept them only if all other avenues have been exhausted. We will not take a boy because they are bored and restless at home or if other child care arrangements are possible. Every boy in school puts others at risk (including your own family) and the safest place remains at home.
4. It is likely that Year 10 boarders will not be able to return until September (unless they can attend daily) however we are currently investigating this further.
5. We are hoping to have some face to face contact with all boys (including Years 7-9) using Microsoft TEAMS but again, this will depend on staff availability.
6. There will be no team sports and most practical subjects will be either stopped or reduced as I need to ensure tools and equipment can be thoroughly cleaned before they are used.

As a parent, I would be reluctant for my son to return to school after half term, even though we are all desperate for that to happen. As the Head I would be mindful of this when ‘expecting’ your son to return also.

Of course, I want to see all boys back at Brymore as soon as possible but I need to be sure we can guarantee social distancing, keep boys and staff safe and provide a meaningful experience beyond ‘baby-sitting’. It was announced yesterday that there would be no additional PPE expected or available to schools which greatly concerns me. Teachers Unions are understandably asking for more clarification from the government before they expect staff to return. As the Head of Brymore I am extremely lucky that my staff share my view of putting the boys first and this is something I am always grateful for and will not abuse by putting them at risk.

I apologise for the lack of information at this stage but I felt that it was important you had some idea of our thinking at the earliest available opportunity. Rest assured, we will be working hard this week to put detailed plans together, which I hope to release soon.

I have been privileged to be the Headteacher of Brymore for nearly ten years. The care and well-being of all of the Brymore family is something I take very seriously. This includes boys and their families, as well as staff and theirs. This will be my over-riding driver when planning to partially re-open the school after half term.

Many thanks for your continued support and please continue also to stay safe.

Yours faithfully



MARK THOMAS

Headteacher