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Dear Parents and Carers,

Changes have been announced thick and fast this week! And as usual, the announcements tend to raise more questions than they answer. The same is likely to be true about this communication but I thought I should share my initial thinking about the government proposals for partial reopening for year groups taking external examinations next year.

First, some clear messages from us that are not related to government announcements:

Years 13 and 11: Details about book returns, collection of results, hoodies, etc. will be given in future updates.

Year 11: To alleviate any remaining concerns in Year 11, please be assured that all BGS students in Y11 have a place in the Sixth Form to study the IB provided they meet the entry criteria as published [here](#). The events of this summer do not change this. You will receive information about an adapted sixth form induction programme for our circumstances before the time of the original planned induction days in late June.

Year 9: After half term, we are going to provide greater focus for Year 9 students by enabling them to **start their GCSE option subjects in place of subjects that they are not going to study at GCSE.** By the time remote learning restarts on 1st June after the half term break (two weeks from now) they will be invited to new Google Classrooms for those option subjects that they are not already studying and will begin preparatory learning to put them in a stronger position in September. This will be equivalent to approximately 2 periods per week. Remote learning in all other subjects will continue normally.

Years 7 and 8: Feedback from some Year 7 & 8 students suggest that they are struggling with the workload at times. We are aware of this and are communicating with their teachers regularly. Teachers are trying to support your children by:

- Setting clear time limits or word counts on tasks;
- Ensuring instructions are clear;
- Breaking tasks down into suggested chunks if work is to be produced across a number of lessons in the week;
- Stressing that where they are set, extension tasks are optional and should only be completed if a student has time left after the main task is complete.

You can also support your child by helping to limit the time that (s)he spends on one task so that it is not time being spent at the expense of other tasks.

Further guidance and support for parents and carers during the lockdown. As I've written before, we are very aware of the pressure on parents and carers who may be balancing a whole range of responsibilities and worries while trying to supervise their children in these abnormal conditions, along with some of our teachers too. We have mentioned the Young Minds website which discusses [here](#) some things that you can do to make daily life as manageable as possible.

Also, I urge you again to look at our weekly [newsletter](#) for ideas and links to helpful information and to visit our [support pages](#). If you have serious concerns you should go to our [safeguarding pages](#).

Year 10 and Year 12: Finally, with regard to the recent announcements regarding Year 10 and Year 12. The guidance is significantly different to that regarding reception and primary classes. It states the following:

“Secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges will... work towards the possibility of providing some face-to-face contact with young people in Year 10 and Year 12 to help them prepare for exams next year.”

“...There are currently no plans to reopen secondary schools for other year groups before the summer holidays.”

Clearly, safety is the priority for us all. I am working with my senior team on modelling various possibilities for reintroducing “some face-to-face contact” with these examination year groups but it is important to understand at this point that the announcement does NOT mean that the school is reopening with Year 10 and Year 12 following their normal timetables! This would simply not be compatible with “implementing protective measures and reducing contacts”.

We are considering a range of options to enable groups of students to have some contact with teachers, where possible (but certainly not always) with their subject teachers but our initial models make it unlikely that any one student would be in school for more than one day per week. Remote learning will continue to be the primary medium throughout the rest of this academic year. There are many issues including transport to and from school, provision of lunch, etc. which present considerable challenges in order to ensure social distancing.

Parents of Year 10 and 12 will be seeking clarity, as I am; this is all I can outline from the information we have at the moment. We await further guidance and advice in the days ahead but my **tentative plan**, contingent so much upon the prevailing conditions and government guidance, **is to offer some contact with these year groups from Monday 8th June at the earliest**. I will write to you again before then as the picture becomes clearer.

We will, of course, remain available for children of critical workers and vulnerable children, where it is deemed that a child is safer in school than at home, particularly from 1st June when many reception, infant and primary schools may begin to reopen. (Please contact us using enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk).

In the meantime, we have one more week before the half term holiday (including the bank holiday) which I am instructing my staff to take; your children (and you!) should also take advantage of this change to the routine and enjoy the benefits of the gradual relaxations to the lockdown conditions.

Best wishes and keep safe.



Steve Elphick
Headteacher