



26th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: 'Fresh hope' (March 2021)

What a joy it has been to welcome back all our young people this month to full time, face to face teaching. Speaking to them each day in lessons and on the playgrounds, I get a real sense of relief from them as they are mixing for the first time in weeks with their peers and staff at the school.

The school is once again engaged in the complex process of awarding 'centre assessed grades' in a few weeks' time for Year 11 and 13 students. We are busy drawing up robust quality assurance and moderation processes which are going through multiple layers of external and internal challenge via bodies such as the Local Authority, MAT schools and the Local Governing Body. We also await with eager anticipation the release of further information from the examination boards in the next few days so that we can finalise these plans.

My firm desire is to ensure that as students prepare for assessments over the next few weeks, the school, parents and community support them well and give them a sense of calm and purpose. I have been grateful over recent days for the emails from parents expressing thanks for the efforts the school has gone to in ensuring a smooth and supportive restart following the recent national lockdown. Re-establishing routines has been key to these efforts; behaviour routines that support positive conversations and relationship development, coupled with routines about high standards of uniform, punctuality and attendance. Where students have struggled with the return, we have continued to work with families to establish the daily rhythm of face to face schooling as we work together as a community.

The school is going to set up a regular, online parent forum so that we can continue to encourage effective and purposeful dialogue with all our stakeholders as we look for ways to constantly improve the quality of our provision. I always value the constructive feedback the school receives from parents and welcome and encourage direct contact and communication with the school.

I have to commend and thank our community volunteers who supported our COVID-19 testing centre in the first two weeks of our return. We completed over 3,500 tests in those two weeks with relatively few positive cases emerging as a result. Very few students have had to isolate following these positive cases; something we hope will continue in our school as we reinforce year group bubbles and zones. Students tell me about their experiences of taking the tests at home and often describe the process with some great hilarity.

Easter approaches. For some this will be a time of religious reflection, for some a time of hope and renewal as spring gets in full swing and the clocks go forward. I, like most of us no doubt, am looking forward to sunnier days and a warmer climate and the sense of fresh hope that this time of year can bring, particularly this year as we see the easing of lockdown measures approaching.

Thank you for your continued support as together we support our young people and each other in emerging well from lockdown.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Bishop (Headteacher)

'The great gift of Easter is hope' (Basil Hume)