

8 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Although the latest issue of the Elton Times was sent last week, I felt that it would be helpful to give a final update from school as we head towards the end of this half-term.

### **Remote Learning**

With my own three children doing home schooling, I am keenly aware of the pressures and difficulties caused by this situation. I appreciate that parents are having to juggle their own jobs and the wider demands of running a household, while also having to check that their children are doing the schoolwork as needed and being given some level of support. As you know, we have tried to follow a structured system of remote learning, with work being set on a day by day basis, based on each student's timetable. We have deliberately gone for a 'mixed' learning approach of live lessons, loom recordings and written activities, as we felt that this was the right balance for the students and would give them a good amount of variety in their learning.

However, as the lockdown has continued we have become aware of the need to have more regular, direct communication with the students, and at least 50% of all lessons should therefore now have an element of live interaction. Registers are being taken in those live slots and it is obviously compulsory for the students to attend. Email notification is sent to the student at least 24 hours before the live lesson, so that they have good notice about logging in at the right time. We are following up those students who are failing to attend or engage, but the biggest consequence for themselves is that they will be falling behind their peers at a substantial rate. If you have any questions about our teaching processes, or if you are having difficulties in accessing the relevant IT equipment, then please contact me directly in school (email is at the bottom of this letter).

### **Year 11**

Based on government advice, we are currently planning for school to reopen on Monday 8 March 2021, two weeks after half-term. While full details have still to be announced, we are working on the basis that all GCSE grades will be assessed from within school, by the relevant subject teams. We expect the deadline for grade submission to be around the end of June. This means that Year 11 students have a few months left to maximise their GCSE grades and we will give them every opportunity to do this. Period 6 classes will be in place for their anticipated return on Monday 8 March 2021, with a timetable of those extra classes being sent in the week after half-term. Further assessment tests and mock exams will be taking place in the week after the Easter holidays - week beginning Monday 19 April 2021. We will also be holding a parental information session before the Easter holidays, so that you are given a full update about how the students are being assessed and the revision sessions that are being offered.

### **In School Provision**

We have tried to achieve a balance between providing in-school places for those families who need it most and following the government's directive to reduce the number of students in the school building as much as is practically possible. At present, our staffing is fully stretched in supervising those students in school, so we offer a reminder that places should only be sought if you fit the government criteria and your child is not able to work at home. The government criteria states that places in school should be available if: at least one parent is a key worker; a child has an Education Health Care Plan or a child has a social worker.

## Half-term Holiday

Unlike the previous lockdown, the government has directed all schools to close during the half-term holiday so we will, unfortunately, not be able to accommodate any students during that time.

## Covid Tests

The government has asked schools to offer two tests to all students before they return to lessons. With the presumption that we will be returning on Monday 8 March 2021, tests will therefore be offered from Friday 26 February 2021 onwards. There is a slot for each form group and it will take each student about 30 minutes to do the test. Details are shown on the attached document. **If you agree with your child taking part in this process, please complete the consent form through this link.**

<https://forms.gle/dCBpo8d2kEDae7rQ8>

We will be in touch again after half-term to reiterate plans for the testing.

This has been a challenging period for students, families and our staff, but the response has again been extremely positive and we could not have managed this situation without the strong support provided from home. Thanks so much for your efforts and patience. The next issue of the Elton Times will be sent in the first week of next half-term, providing an update about where we stand at that time. Hopefully we will remain on course for a full school reopening by Monday 8 March 2021.

Thanks again and best wishes

*J Wilton*

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