

# LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents,

## School closure and future re-opening - Year 10 and Lower Sixth pupils

I am writing to update you about school closure and future re-opening.

We are planning for return to a type of normality in September, although it is too early to know what restrictions may be in place then. There is also some uncertainty about the next few weeks, while remote teaching through Microsoft Teams continues.

### Government guidance

Schools will soon be allowed to begin to provide some face-to-face support to supplement remote education of pupils in Year 10 and Year 12. The Director of Public Health for Lancashire has advised that this should not begin before **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June** at the earliest. He will review that date in a week's time.

This does **not** mean that lessons will start in school for students in Year 10 and the Lower Sixth. Government guidance limits the options available. The government's expectations are that:

- Remote education will continue to be the predominant form of education delivery
- Only a quarter (25%) of those year groups may attend school at any one time
- Split day rotas may not be used (e.g. class groups and teachers swapping during the day), although some mixing may be unavoidable
- Pupils should be discouraged from using public transport

We are conscious that many of our day pupils live at some distance from the school, and that our boarders live across the country and abroad.

**We do not plan to teach lessons in school to students in Year 10.** We think that it would be impossible to provide meaningful subject-specific teaching. Remote teaching will continue as at present. We are considering offering drop-in sessions for pastoral check-in and support to Year 10 students, and I would welcome your feedback on this.

**We are also considering the options for Lower Sixth students.** We would like to offer some face-to-face opportunities for pastoral or academic support if we can do so in a way that adds to, rather than detracting from, our ongoing teaching and learning. Your feedback would be very welcome.

### Boarding

The Department for Education and the Boarding Schools Association are developing helpful guidance about the re-opening of boarding schools. A boarding house or individual building is considered as a "household" in terms of public health. There are still a number of significant unknowns – such as how to manage quarantine for pupils travelling from overseas, and appropriate occupancy levels of different areas. We will be in regular contact with boarding families as plans become clearer.

We are working towards the quality assurance recommendations of the BSA's Covid Safe Charter as we plan for the re-opening of all our boarding houses in September. The charter can be seen here:

<https://www.boarding.org.uk/userfiles/bsa/Covid%20documents/Covid%20Safe%20Charter.pdf>

### **Pupils currently in school**

The school has been open for children of keyworkers ever since school closure on 20<sup>th</sup> March, and for children requiring particular support. Some pupils from all year groups are in school every day. We would like those pupils to continue to work in school, and we can add other critical workers' children to that group. This has given us an opportunity to establish new hygiene and distancing routines. These range from advice notices, distancing points and hand sanitation stations, to new protocols for everything from First Aid and PPE to break time activities and games.

### **Looking ahead**

We hope and expect that school will be able to re-open as fully as possible in the first week of September. We may well extend the start of year induction for new pupils by a day or two, and therefore phase the start of term slightly for all pupils.

We are working out contingency plans for other scenarios. We have given considerable thought to measures such as one-way systems, use of outside space, and options to stagger lunch times to reduce pupil congestion – amongst others.

We are following closely the emerging advice to schools about wider areas including sport and music. Our commitment to give pupils an exceptional range of opportunities outside the classroom will not change. However, we expect some of those activities to be modified for a while.

### **GCSEs and A-levels 2021**

Pupils and parents will be concerned that school closures may disadvantage students in Year 10 and the Lower Sixth. This is an area of active discussion with the government and exam boards.

Ofqual, the exams regulator, takes its responsibilities to students very seriously: their ongoing commitment is that no group of students will be disadvantaged by circumstances. We do not yet know what changes there may be to exams or grading next summer. However, I do have confidence that these year groups will be treated fairly, and that your sons and daughters will end up with the grades that they deserve and work so hard for.

In particular, we believe that LRGS students will generally be very well placed as they work towards their GCSEs and A-levels. We have been very pleased with the way that pupils have engaged with remote learning. It is immensely impressive to see what our pupils and teachers have achieved.

Best wishes to students in their assessment weeks – this week for the Lower Sixth, and next week for Year 10. With huge thanks for your ongoing support for the school, and all best wishes,

Yours faithfully,

Dr C J Pyle  
Headmaster