

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Thursday 28 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update on our progress towards some face-to-face contact for Year 10 and Year 12

I want to update you on plans for some face-to-face contact for Wootton Academy Trust learners next half term.

Monday 15 June is the earliest date that any face-to-face contact for learners in Year 10 and Year 12 will begin at Kimberley College and Wootton Upper School, other than those children who have been entitled to access on-site provision throughout the lockdown period because they are vulnerable or children of essential key workers.

The guidance for secondary schools is that they should plan on the basis that:

- from the week commencing 15 June, schools can invite Year 10 and 12 learners back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, subject to the government's 5 tests being met;
- face-to-face support is intended to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 pupils, which should remain the predominant mode of education during this term for pupils in these year groups;
- based on the latest scientific and medical advice, the government believes we need to continue to control the numbers attending school to reduce the risk of increasing transmission. Therefore, schools are able to have up to a quarter of the Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts (for schools with sixth forms) in school at any one time;
- any plans that secondary schools have made for pupils to return earlier in June should be amended to commence from 15 June.

Guidance for FE colleges, published on 14 May, which applies to Sixth Form Colleges stated:

- from the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, sixth-form colleges should offer some face to face contact to learners in Year 12, alongside their existing offer to vulnerable learners and the children of critical workers.

A group of three Senior Leadership Team members, namely Mrs McMenemy, Mrs McMorn and Dr Mackay are working on the Trust's risk assessments for the school and college. They are being supported by our Health and Safety Competent Person, Sherryl Cousins, who is providing them with expert advice. Mrs McMenemy is keeping the Trust Board updated on the group's work in preparation for a return of more learners.

We are using the official guidance for secondary schools and the guidance for FE colleges and Sixth Form Colleges to complete our risk assessments. There is a lot to do and a lot to think about. None of this should be rushed. **Our overriding priority is keeping everybody safe; therefore, we will only start face-to-face contact once we have ensured all risks have been identified and minimized.**

We aim to present risk assessments to the MAT Board at the end of next week, in preparation for a return of up to a quarter of Year 10 and a quarter of Year 12.

The MAT Board will want to ensure that the Local Governing Boards, staff, parents and carers and professional associations have access to the approved risk assessments, for comment. At the moment I anticipate that this will be in the week beginning Monday 8 June and is likely to be about staff briefings, induction around risk management, curriculum reappraisal, and providing reassurance to parents/carers about new ways of doing things.

Any physical return of students will need, as best as possible, to be kept to small groups, with as little interaction with other groups and staff as possible. We need to be mindful of community transmission.

We plan to gather the views of staff, parents/carers and learners before face-to-face contact begins.

Everybody has worked really hard to put in place distance learning tasks for all learners; we know that we need to continue to develop on-line learning further in the coming weeks; I am very grateful for the staff leading this work.

There is no mention of any face-to-face contact for Year 9 pupils and the guidance states that at any time 75% of learners in Year 10 and Year 12 will continue to access distance learning.

Some parents/carers and learners themselves will be anxious about returning to face-to-face education over the next half-term. The decision for your child to start on-site education next half term will be made by parents and carers and we expect that some parents will make the decision that now is not the right time. Please email the Pastoral Team, to let them know your concerns and/or any worries your child has about returning to School or College. The Pastoral Team will then contact you and your child in advance of their return.

Year 12 and 13 Pastoral (Kimberley): kimberleypastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Year 9 Pastoral Team (Wootton): Year9pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Year 10 Pastoral Team (Wootton): Year10pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Year 11 Pastoral Team (Wootton): Year11pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Therefore, in summary:

- our overriding priority is keeping everybody safe; therefore, we will only start face-to-face contact once we have ensured all risks have been identified and minimized;
- the earliest date any face-to-face contact will begin at the College and the School is **Monday 15th June**;
- before, any face-to-face contact starts, we will ask parents/carers to let us know whether they want their children in Year 10 and Year 12 to attend the contact [please do not let us know at the moment];
- our provision for Key Worker children and other vulnerable children will continue from Monday 1st June after half term.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust

Wootton Academy Trust operates:
Wootton Upper School & Arts College
Kimberley 16-19 STEM College
Registered in England and Wales
Company No. 7740758

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