

Belong . . .
Believe . . .
Achieve . . .



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Chair of Governors: Mr G Bryce

26 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am sure you have read in the media that, as things currently stand, secondary schools in Wales are scheduled to begin a phased return to school from the 15th March for older pupils and in particular Year 11. Although we are starting to take delivery of additional PPE and lateral flow testing kits we do not as yet have the revised operational guidance which will dictate the nature of that return. We continue to liaise with the Council to ensure that we are kept fully abreast of developments but it is clear that the next two weeks are likely to be fairly challenging in terms of designing a plan for the return and communicating it as clearly as we can to all stakeholders. We can only try our best!

We are, however, slowly becoming more clear as to what centre determined grades will mean in practice for learners who are to receive qualifications this summer and the senior team is already working with departmental teams to ensure rigour and fairness in this regard. Steve Davies at Welsh Government insisted this week that Year 11 should not be returning to any 'sausage factory' exam prep approaches and I endorse the sentiment while recognising that in a number of circumstances we may be 'chasing evidence' from those who have found engagement more challenging. He also promoted an approach which would try to focus on preparing pupils for what they intend to do next year and it is these ideals which we need to try to sensitively balance with the need to construct sound evidence bases for the grades that we give. Mrs Mainwaring will be forwarding a letter to Year 11 parents which explains the latest picture re assessment processes later today.

I have been quite saddened hearing stories from primary colleagues across Wales as to the physically pale and generally quite depressed cohort of pupils returned to their schools this week - we intend to be very mindful of what our older pupils have been through in recent months as they begin their return to school and do our very best to encourage and support them. I suppose it is at times like this that our job is to make sense of the school's motto for our young people and try to make them feel that they Belong once again, that they should Believe there is a brighter future out there for them and at the same time try to help them Achieve the grades they are capable of to set them on the right foot for life beyond our school (and also this awful pandemic). The staff and I are very excited at the prospect of welcoming pupils back to school in a safe and phased manner as Easter approaches and please rest assured that we will do our very best to effectively implement Welsh Government operational guidance as and when we receive it. We shall be in touch again once we have further relevant information but in the meantime please feel free to continue to contact the relevant staff if you need their assistance and support via the contact details on the home page of the school website.

Thank you once again for all your dedication and hard work in trying to support your children's efforts at home and please try to enjoy your weekend. Let's hope for a Welsh victory on the rugby field tomorrow to further lift the spirits of the nation!

Regards

Mr Jason Hicks BA(Hons) MA (Ed) NPQH