



Charles Darwin School

Operated by the Charles Darwin Academy Trust

Headteacher: Sunil Chotai, BSc

12th June 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

RE: Update

I trust that this update letter finds you and your families as well as possible.

Face to face support for Years 10 and 12

Following recent announcements and guidance from the Department of Education we have made plans for Year 10 and Year 12 students to attend school for this face to face support. The newly amended government guidance says that:

From 15 June, secondary schools are able to offer face-to-face support for a quarter of the year 10 and 12 cohort at any one time. Alongside this the government is asking secondary schools to:

- *Continue providing full-time provision for vulnerable pupils in all year groups (including year 10 and year 12)*
- *Continue providing full-time provision for children of critical workers in all year groups (including year 10 and year 12)*
- *Provide some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 pupils, with a clear expectation that remote education will continue to be the predominant form of education delivery for these year groups and that this should be of high quality*
- *Continue to use best endeavours to support all other pupils remaining at home, making use of the available remote education support and ensuring a high quality offer*

In addition to this the guidance says that:

- *We can no longer plan to have children attending these face to face sessions in rotation - only one group can attend per day.*
- *Only 25% of students in year 10 and 12 (i.e. in our case maximum of 87) can attend on any one day.*

For Year 10 our offer consists of 2 hour support sessions in English, Maths and Science over the next few weeks. For Year 12 we have scheduled 2 hour support sessions in all their subjects. As parents and carers will appreciate the planning for this has been complicated due to obvious constraints arising from the need to ensure social distancing and the wellbeing of all concerned. The plans are now complete and we have sent out a separate letter to the families of Year 10 and 12 students to explain to them the arrangements in detail along with a schedule of their classes.

We have undertaken a risk assessment and our provision and other organisation has been heavily influenced by this assessment of risk. This risk assessment is available on our website under COVID-19 Information.

As you can imagine pupil numbers attending are crucial in our planning and in the assessment of risk because we have to ensure that the requirements of social distancing are adhered to strictly in each scheduled class. The consequence of this is that we cannot accommodate classes of more than a certain number in certain spaces in our school. Because of this and the associated scheduling complications it is not going to be possible to add pupils to groups along the way to the arrangements that we have already made. This is particularly so for Year 10 as the numbers in many classes are such that we cannot accommodate more students without significantly compromising social distancing arrangements. It is therefore with regret that I have to inform parents that for the time being we can only accommodate students whose families have responded affirmatively to our offer.

As part of our arrangements the school gates will be closed from 9.00am each day from now on. Parents will not be able to drive on to the school site.

Remote working for all students

The government have now said that students will now not be returning to schooling on school sites until September at the earliest. We will therefore continue to set work and facilitate learning as best as we can remotely. Our mechanism for communicating this will continue to be via the online Showmyhomework platform.

Increasingly teaching staff will be scheduling MS Teams facilitated lessons, these lessons are more interactive or are recorded by the member of staff to help explain. These lessons are known to help with student engagement and motivation. Over the last few days many members of staff have begun to schedule more of these lessons and many students are beginning to see the advantages of joining in such lessons. The take-up of these lessons now needs to be a focus for improvement and I would encourage all parents to speak to their child and ensure that they are ready to participate in these MS teams lessons as and when they are scheduled. A lot of guidance has been sent out already and some written guidance is available on Showmyhomework. Details regarding these lessons will be in the year group Newsletters.

The feedback suggests that once the initial teething issues have been ironed out students really do appreciate them; their learning, progress and enjoyment seems to benefit considerably.

When students are engaged in MS Teams lessons it is really important that they abide by our expectations. Each member of staff will explain specific lesson rules at the start of each MS Teams lesson. Students and parents should be aware that

- a) We expect no use of mobile phones to record lessons - this will be seen as a breach of privacy and disciplinary action will follow.
- b) Each MS teams lesson will be recorded by the school to ensure safeguarding and any poor conduct during it will be followed up.
- c) Our expectation is that everyone abides by the rules/expectations set out by their class teacher.

Food Bank

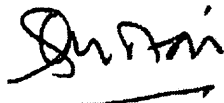
Families may be aware that a few weeks ago we set up a small food collection provision to help some of our families who are experiencing considerable financial hardship at the moment. The response has been overwhelming. My thanks to everyone who has donated, your generosity is very much appreciated. We will continue to collect these items so if you wish to donate, you can do this in the school reception area. We deliver these parcels every Friday.

If there are any families who feel they would benefit from a food parcel please do not hesitate to contact me.

Children's Well-being and Mental Health

Whilst we believe that the vast majority of our pupils are coping very well with the lockdown situation, there may be some who are struggling a little with their physical and mental well-being. If parents have serious concerns it is important that they let us know via the Pastoral Team.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sunil Chotai', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Sunil Chotai
Headteacher