

10th June 2020

Dear Parents,

Re: Year 12 return to school

Balcarras is hoping to open in a limited manner for Year 10 and Year 12 from 15th June.

The school has done its best to follow all of the guidance issued by government. However, it will be important that pupils are alert to the guidance and do their best to minimise risk. Parents are also key to minimising risk, by encouraging pupils to behave sensibly and follow the restrictions.

Guidance about **Podz, times** and **rooms** will be sent to pupils via the VLE. The Year 12 students will be divided into 4 Podz – and will have lesson opportunities in the three subjects that they intend to continue studying in Year 13.

We would politely request that parents help by:

- Ensuring that every student has appropriate equipment, and in particular a full pencil case every day, with spares, and their calculator if relevant, so there is never a need to share or lend equipment.
- It would be very useful if every pupil could always carry with them a bottle of **hand sanitizer** and a packet of **disinfectant wipes**. While the school will do its best to provide these where possible, it is still extremely difficult for schools to access this equipment and suppliers are still very short of stock. If parents can help with this it would be enormously helpful.

We have tried to stagger the day, bringing different year groups in at different times. In line with the guidance, only one quarter of the year group will be on site on any day. Each day Year 12 students will have one consultation lesson in one of the three subjects that they indicated that they intended to study in Year 13. We appreciate that for some Year 12 students, particularly those who would ordinarily rely on public transport, travel to Balcarras may not be possible. As a result, in addition to the consultation lessons being offered, all subjects will continue to set work via the VLE.

Year 12 pupils can arrive at any time from 12:45, with their allocated consultation lesson commencing at 1:00 and finishing at 2.30. Pupils must go straight to their allocated classrooms and not socialise or mix in the car park, playground, or Sixth Form Common Room. The two Sixth Form Study rooms and the Sixth Form Common Room will not be available to students outside the allocated lessons or before or after these lessons. In order to best ensure that the school complies with the government's social distancing advice, and also provides fair access to all students to their subjects, we will not be able to accommodate any changes at all to the lessons allocations as offered.

We would be grateful if parents could encourage students to observe sensible social distancing practise, and not to walk close together both on site, and in their journeys to and from school. We would also ask that students who drive to school avoid car-pooling. At the end of lessons, students must go straight home and not socialise on site, in the park or at the local shops. Parents will be vital to making this strategy successful.

Each Year 12 Pod will consist of a maximum of 12 students in order for the school to comply with social distancing guidance, and many will be much smaller. In the consultation lessons, students will be expected to observe social distancing guidelines also.

The same rules for behaviour will apply as they always have at Balcarras. Phones are not allowed to be used while on the school site, though teaching staff may ask students to use their phones for research during their consultation lessons. The classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned every day when lessons have finished. The canteen and tuck shops will not be open, so pupils will need to bring their own snacks. For good hygiene, it would be good for each pupil to bring sufficient water for their consultation lesson, and avoid using the school's water fountains if possible. Again, we will be encouraging students to observe sensible social distancing practise if they need to use toilet facilities.

Pupils can come to school in Mufti. Students are able to wear face masks in their lessons if they wish.

We kindly ask that parents do NOT come onto the school site. Reception will be available to take phone calls if you have a concern and we will always try to respond to e-mails promptly. This is far safer than face to face contact where possible.

If a student feels ill at the start of the day then the advice is not to come in to school. We would like to absolutely minimise the risk to all our pupils. If a student is unable to attend their allocated consultation lesson, we would be grateful if the school could be informed in advance.

Should any student be unable to attend in the weeks ahead, whether that be due to health concerns or transport issues, please do contact me, and we will work to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in any way.

This is both a worrying time and an exciting time for all. Balcarras has done its best to minimise risk to both students and staff, while trying to find a good balance of providing face-to-face education for the key exam year groups. The support from parents has been exceptional over the last few weeks and we look forward to welcoming back safely Year 12 students to our school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Leatherbarrow', written in a cursive style.

Mr. Leatherbarrow