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13th July 2020

Returning to learning in school

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, I would like to say how impressed teachers have been with the efforts of students over the lockdown period. The vast majority of our students have engaged with the work which has been set and there has been a wealth of positive dialogue between students and staff. As a team of staff, we are grateful for all the support you have provided to us and your child over these past few months. Whilst we have always known how fortunate we are to have parents/carers who play such an active role in our students' success and academic achievement, I wanted to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and thanks, in recognition of your contribution over the past few months.

The time will soon be upon us to return to school. When the government announced the reopening of schools from September, they stated "Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all students can return to school sooner rather than later" (*Department for Education, 2020*).

School is not the same without students in it. The staff at Mary Webb School and Science College are very much looking forward to welcoming your child back to school, and for our new Year 7s and new members of staff, meeting them in person for the first time. We hope that your child is also looking forward to starting school again in September and the return to routine and normality.

We feel it is important to make the return to Mary Webb School and Science College as close to 'normal' as possible, however I am sure you will appreciate some things will need to be a bit different:

Classrooms

At Mary Webb School and Science College teachers have always been able to lay out their classroom in ways which suit them and their teaching. However, from September all classrooms will be in rows. This is not a huge change but something I wanted to draw your attention to.

Learning

Students will be given an exercise book to complete their work in. The 'school' book will be kept in school. Students will also be given a book or a resource by their teacher to complete their home learning in. This can be brought into school, but the teacher will not take it in. They may look at it and offer advice on how to improve work but this 'home' book will be taken home. Some teachers may request that home learning tasks are completed online through educake, GCSEPod, subject specific online platform, or they may give students a specific booklet or workbook for a subject. If work is completed electronically then it can be emailed or submitted online to their teacher and they will be able to give you feedback on it.

For those students returning to us in September there will be a new learning routine in place. We are launching '*visible consistencies*'. As a part of this we will be using retrieval questions to support learning on the return to school. This will be in the form of 5 questions on the board at the start of each lesson. The aim of this is for teachers to elicit an understanding of what knowledge and understanding students have gained over lockdown and where any misconceptions or lack of knowledge may be. This will then enable staff to support students and revisit learning as necessary.

For our Year 11 students I wish to reassure you that they will not be faced with a barrage of examinations on their return. Much like the rest of the students, they will have quiz questions every lesson. They will also have assessments at the end of the first half term, which will be heavily based on the mock exams they were preparing for prior to the national school closures. They will be thoroughly prepared for these assessments by their teachers. The home learning tasks set each week will be comprised of activities which will support this preparation.

For those students who wish to continue working over the summer, there will be a series of links placed on the school website in the first week of the summer holidays, under the heading 'Summer Learning Opportunities', which will be in the 'Students, Parents and Carers' section of the school website. There are a range of subjects to choose from, with all providing suggestions for learning activities, from which all students can choose what they would like to do. There is no expectation that students should engage with these materials, but they are there for those who wish to use them and if there are students/parents/carers who feel they may benefit from them.

Reading

The most important activity your child can participate in over the summer to support their learning and help to prepare them for the return to school in September is reading. "There is a strong correlation between student reading ability and eventual performance across all subjects at GCSE" (*GL assessment*). Mr Hollands (teacher of English and Head of House) has set up every Mary Webb student with log in details so they can have access to a website called myON, which provides an extensive online library of texts. There will be lessons in September during which teachers will show students how to get the most out of myON. For now, further guidance and instructions on how to search for and find the right book for you can be found here <http://www.renlearn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Parent-Guide-to-myON-1.pdf>

If your child will be in Year 7 in September here is a guide on how to access the materials on myON:

- 1) go to <https://www.myon.co.uk/login/index.html>
- 2) login using their username this will be the year they start at Mary Webb, the first three letters of their surname then the first three letters of their first name. For example, if my name was Roberto Firmino and my year group started at Mary Webb in 2019, my username would be 19firrob and the password 'myon'
- 3) when they login, the first thing they see will be a questionnaire about their hobbies, interests, and preferred areas of study. They should complete this questionnaire so myON is able to recommend books based on their answers
- 4) they can then search the myON library and read at their leisure. They can search for texts based on genre and their year group, or other filters.

Please do not worry if you cannot access this. The *Education Endowment Foundation* stresses that any reading is good, “Don’t worry too much about the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of reading each day. Books are great, but leaflets, comics, recipes and instructions on a webpage can all be great too. Why not set your child a reading challenge: How many different things can you read in a day?”

Mental preparation

In preparation for a return to school in September I would like to stress the importance of a healthy sleep routine. Where sleep routines have changed as a result of lockdown it would be a good idea to start to re-establish those healthy sleep patterns. I have added a link to the mental health section of the school website, this will take you to advice not just about sleep, but contains other links you may find useful over the summer

<https://www.marywebbschool.com/mental-health/>

I hope that you and your families enjoy a restful and reading packed summer. We at Mary Webb School and Science College are looking forward welcoming everyone back and hearing all about our students’ summer break.

Yours sincerely

E Weston

Miss E Weston
Assistant Headteacher