

8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

**RE: Phase 3, End of Term and Full Reopening**

We are now rapidly approaching the end of the summer term and the end of this academic year. It has been the most unusual year in education in recent times and we hope the summer break offers our staff, students and parents time for a well-deserved rest. With this in mind, we wanted to take the opportunity to update you about the Phase 3 arrangements for the final week of term and the recently published Government guidance about a full reopening in September.

**Phase 3 of Face-to-Face Sessions**

Year 10 students should attend the Academy on their normal allocated day and at the normal time 10:00am – 1.30pm. As you are aware, face-to-face sessions have concentrated on the core subjects of Maths, Science, Engineering and English. Due to the current restrictions on keeping students in their groups (bubbles) whilst they are with us, it is not possible to include all option subjects in the face-to-face sessions. Option subjects have set specific tasks over the last two weeks and these have been physically given to the students over the course of the last two weeks to hand in on their last session. However, there are two particular option subjects that needed some face-to-face input before the summer break to signpost coursework that needs launching. Therefore, next week, students who take Art or Product Design will have input from specific teachers at various points of their morning but in the main, they should prepare for their normal core subject sessions to continue as normal.

Year 12 students should attend the Academy on their normal allocated day and at the normal time 10:00am – 1:00pm where A level and BTEC sessions will continue as previously outlined to students and parents.

**End of Term Arrangements**

WMG Academy closes to students and staff on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Online learning will continue until this date and students are expected to remain engaged. Small school for vulnerable students and the children of key workers will also finish on this date and will not take place throughout the summer.

In order to try and bridge any gaps in learning, we are asking students to complete transition work or bridging tasks over the summer holidays. The majority of these tasks will be accessible through an online portal. Students can gain access to this portal via a leaflet which will be given to them during their face-to-face sessions next week. The leaflet will contain QR codes which will take students directly to the work that they need to complete. Alternatively, there will be a link on the leaflet to the work if there is an issue in accessing using the QR codes. A copy of the leaflet will also be emailed to parents of those students who are unable to attend the face-to-face sessions next week.

We will expect all online work to be completed prior to September and any written work to be submitted in the first week of September. The support of parents to facilitate the completion of these tasks is vital in ensuring students have the necessary grounding prior to their return and will be a large component of their success in the first term of the next academic year.

WMG Academy for Young Engineers, Chelmsley Road, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5FD

## Full Reopening in September

As you will be aware, the government has now released detailed guidance for the planned return to school for all students in September. We know we must work towards all children accessing a full-time education again. The new guidance released by the DfE can be found [here](#).

Whilst we are not yet in a position to describe in detail what academy-life will look like in September, we want you to know that we will always prioritise health and safety; we know that you need to be confident in our ability to manage and make safe decisions in a sometimes rapidly changing situation.

It is clear that we cannot create a totally risk-free environment. However, the work we have already done to prepare for the current phased reopening, and indeed for the autumn term makes us confident that we can balance and minimise any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience for children and young people. We have been preparing so that we can be agile in response to what could be a changing situation.

There are a number of principles that are now influencing our planning for September. Rigorous implementation of the Public Health England 'system of controls' will reduce the risk of transmission and make the school safer; adopting these measures includes:

- Reviewing our systems in place to make sure people who are ill stay at home and our immediate response to anyone with symptoms is fast and effective.
- Reviewing the facilities and protocols we have in place to support robust hand and respiratory hygiene when all students and staff return to the Academy.
- Reviewing our cleaning arrangements so that we can maintain enhanced hygiene across the school site. We have already increased our daily cleaning regime.
- Ensuring that we can actively engage with NHS Test and Trace as more staff and students return to the Academy, meaning we can ensure our responses are swift and targeted.

The guidance also means that making a number of fundamental changes to the way the Academy operates will be necessary. This means we can reduce social contact and maximise distancing between everyone onsite, minimising the potential for contamination and contraction of the virus. In line with the guidelines, our initial planning will consider:

- Restricting the areas of the Academy site that student bubbles are able to access.
- Staggering break, lunchtimes and start and finish times so that we are able to manage the school day with groups avoiding contact with each other as much as possible.
- Ensuring that staff are able to maintain distance from students and other staff by arranging our classrooms and modifying shared areas to accommodate this. Highly co-ordinated timings of movement and circulation around the building will also form part of our control measures.
- Rigorous risk assessment of practical subjects so that we are clear about how we will ensure that our children continue to have a broad and balanced experience whilst still keeping safe and making the most of our state-of-the-art facilities.
- Detailed planning of our extra-curricular provision and enrichment options, this is likely to be phased in over time.
- Contingency plans for remote learning in the event of a local lockdown and for any students that have to self-isolate.

Now that we have received the guidance, we will work through it and ensure that our planning is detailed, thorough and seeks to ensure students get the best possible educational experience in the safest way possible. This will take time. We ask that parents and students remain patient over the

WMG Academy for Young Engineers, Chelmsley Road, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5FD

coming weeks whilst we continue to plan and prepare. We will write again in more detail about what academy-life will be like in September and the detailed arrangements for how students will return to the Academy in the first week of term.

We appreciate that many of you will have questions about how this can be safely managed, and we want to reassure you that we are taking this responsibility very seriously. We will need to balance our aim of providing students with a high quality, full curriculum entitlement with the need to maintain stringent controls in order to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within our community.

We do understand that some students, parents and staff will be anxious about a full return to school, especially where they or their families have been shielding for a long time. Our experience to date has shown that prioritising time for conversations and support is critical and so we will ensure availability of staff to talk to those who are particularly anxious. We are committed to hearing your individual concerns and adapting our plans to address these wherever we can. Our ambition is to have everyone back in school and attendance for students will be mandatory, but we will not enforce this without great care and careful consideration for individual circumstances.

### **Keeping Children Safe**

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends during this period, WMG Academy and the government recognises that many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. The DfE have released new guidance about keeping children safe online. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice and is available by clicking [here](#).

### **Ongoing Communication**

Please remember that any parental communications are available on our website by clicking [here](#). If you need to contact the Academy urgently, you can do so by calling Reception on 0121 289 3556, however we ask that non-urgent enquiries are made via email to [solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk](mailto:solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk). Safeguarding concerns should include the phrase 'CONFIDENTIAL – SAFEGUARDING' in the email subject line. Please note that phone lines will not be monitored over the summer and responses from individual members of staff should not be expected.

We really appreciate the support and encouragement from parents over the last few months. It has been a particularly challenging time and hearing such positive comments from our academy community has given us the determination to keep going and make this time as beneficial for our students as possible.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague  
Executive Principal



Mr S Tait  
Associate Principal