



1. Business Critical Decisions

School leadership and Staff appointments

Following interviews at the start of May, we have successfully appointed two SLT secondments; Mr Ilya Haycock to develop climate for learning and Mrs Karen Appleby to develop learning and teaching. There was great strength in all of the applications within school and it was good to see how much potential we have in the staff team. Miss Rebecca Haydock was also appointed as Advanced Pastoral Lead to support the growth in numbers and the pastoral team.

Appointments (Replacements) - We have already recruited a Geography teacher (To replace Miss Olivia Lewis who has moved on to promotion), 2 Science teachers (To replace Miss Pheobe Cull and an additional member of staff to provide increased capacity for intervention in line with the model implemented in Maths and English). We are about to appoint a new Head's PA due to maternity leave and a change of role and 3 Teaching Assistants to replace existing roles.

New appointments – We are about to appoint an RE teacher remotely, a SENDco, 3 additional Teaching Assistants (there may be more required once we are fully aware of the needs of Year 6 and any transition funding which has been successfully granted), a Facilities manager, admin support and Careers/Learning outside the classroom admin role. All of these roles have been built into the budget and are new posts to support the growth in numbers. It is likely that most of these interviews will be undertaken remotely but plans are in place to ensure we have a full complement of staff ready for September and that all interviews are conducted safely, to minimise risk.

Admissions

We currently have 150 students allocated to Year 7 for the September intake with a waiting list of 18 and 4 appeals. It looks like 5 or 6 students on the original 150 may be attending a different school which will enable more from the waiting list to be offered places. Appeals were originally due to be held on the 15th May but these have been delayed due to Covid19 and the authority are rescheduling them to be held remotely but no date has yet been confirmed.

Return to teaching planning

As we understand fully the implications of the guidance and announcement regarding the reopening of schools from the 1st June 2020, we are currently reviewing the use of Google Classroom and exploring ways of providing face to face lessons remotely.

The guidance for secondary schools currently states that;

- *secondary schools are to begin some **face to face support with year 10 pupils, although we do not expect these pupils to return on a full-time basis at this stage***
- *all schools and childcare providers to continue to offer places to the priority groups – vulnerable children and children of critical workers – they have been supporting since the end of March*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

*We will ask secondary schools to **offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 students who are due to take key exams next year**, alongside the full time provision they are offering to priority groups.*

This will not be a return to full timetables or pupils back in school or college full time, rather some support to supplement pupils' remote education. In line with implementing protective measures and reducing contacts, schools and colleges should limit the attendance of the year 10 cohort in the setting at any one time and to keep students in small groups.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

In light of the information currently available, we are exploring a number of options including online lessons and what face to face contact could look like. This could potentially include some time in school at some point in the summer term, for groups of Year 10 students, staggered so that we can assess current rate of progress, key areas to focus and also to support health and well-being. This may initially be with tutors and some teaching staff although the plans are being developed by the senior leadership team, in conjunction with liaison through the Secondary Head's network in Cheshire West and Chester and will only happen once all the necessary risk assessments have been completed and agreed by all. Further details will be shared when guidance has been received from other schools, the local authority and Teaching Unions. We are also liaising with the BEV Primary Schools over some transition for Year 6 once students have had some time to settle back into the routine of school, however, we recognise that not all students may return and therefore more work will need to be done on this in September, depending on how events unfold over the coming weeks and months. Plans will include staggered starts and endings to the day, one way system, staggered lunch and breaks, new cleaning routines and more as the guidance is issued and updated almost daily.

Policy changes (e.g. governor meetings and frequency of meetings)

We know that all schools are facing exceptional circumstances and there is a need for governing bodies to play a full role in supporting and guiding their schools in this time of crisis. Our current meeting structure (and the gaps between committee meetings) is not suited to the current circumstances where many of our decisions will impact across the whole school and importantly, decisions will have to be taken in a timely manner - some urgently.

The Head, Chair and Vice Chair of Governors have proposed that the current Full Governing Body and committee structure will be replaced temporarily by special meetings held *monthly* (by video conferencing) and that all governors will be encouraged to participate to support the rapidly changing picture.

New build



The DfE have completed the legal processes to allow the build to begin, after many months. The final signatures of Trustees have now obtained and Pavaways are ready to begin work on the new build in June. Discussions have been held with the local authority over additional accommodation to ensure there is adequate provision to meet the expected numbers in September. 6 mobile classrooms are being planned for along with an office space which will ensure we have enough space to timetable effectively for September.

2. Safeguarding & Well-being

Providing care for vulnerable children (including FSM and ECHP) and Children of key workers

Since the school closed on the 20th March, we have been providing childcare provision for approximately 12 students each day, comprising of children of key/critical workers those with vulnerabilities. Staff have been coming in on a rota to support these students. Students have enjoyed lots of physical activity outside and creative tasks in school, alongside accessing work through Google Classroom. During this period of closure, the safeguarding team have been extremely busy.

- During the initial lockdown we identified the 50 most vulnerable families who we knew would immediately struggle in regards to food and we delivered food parcels.
- This was then superseded by the provision of food to the Blacon Community Hub and Holy Trinity Church.
- However, there have continued to be families who have hit periods of crisis and we have supported approximately 15 families with additional food parcels and or vouchers to attend the local food banks. This has often involved our staff supporting vulnerable families to collect these items.
- We followed government advice and identified the vulnerable students who met government criteria. These were students with Social workers, either at Child Protection, Child in Need or Looked After. The vulnerable students also included those with an EHCP and Young Carers. We contacted all of these families at the start and made them aware that they had a school place should they choose to use it. This amounted to 81 students in total.
- Very few of these families took up this offer. The only group who have consistently attended are the 7 students who are at Child Protection as Social Care have exerted the greatest pressure on these families as they have the most leverage with this group.
- We have been in daily contact with the Child Protection Social workers when students have not attended.
- 12 students have routinely accessed school provision. These are not all vulnerable as some are the children of key workers.
- The safeguarding team have completed all Child protection conferences and CIN reviews. These have either been done by email or by using skype to have virtual meetings.
- TAF meetings were initially suspended but they have started to take place again in the last couple of weeks, these too are being completed where possible via skype.
- All requests from Social workers, Police or the courts have been completed.
- We have received £250 from the Virtual School for all looked after students to support their wellbeing. We have supported this process by contacting all Carers and identifying who needed laptops as this was a priority and identifying other suitable purchases for those who already had laptops.
- Every week we have completed a return for the Local Authority to update them on the situation in school in regards to who is attending or not.

Free School Meals

At the start of the lockdown, all of the staff worked tirelessly to create food parcels for our families in receipt of Free School Meals and staff delivered just short of 100 parcels to families known to be self-isolating. The staff were



fantastic at joining together to create the food parcels, under the watchful eye of Kelly Broadbent. We then linked in to the Blacon Community Hub and Holy Trinity Church. The Community Hub received £108k from the Westminster Foundation to support the supply of food and we have delivered orders to the hub to provide for the families. Caroline da Gunha from the Westminster Foundation, contacted me at the start of the lockdown after seeing our post offering food for all families so the additional funding has been invaluable.



With regards to the national voucher scheme, we have experienced delays and technical difficulties, as have been well reported in the media. We applied the day after it was announced on the news and it took 4 weeks for us to actually receive the first 2 weeks of vouchers, to cover Easter. We made the decision to print and post them to each family, to make it as easy as possible to access for our families. It has taken us a further 4 weeks for the next order to be processed and we are still experiencing difficulties but hope to be able to provide £60 of vouchers to cover 4 weeks, in the next few days and have placed further orders well in advance.

Reducing risk

The following areas are key points we are addressing in terms of any possible reopening of school; Additional Cleaning, ventilation, personal hygiene, PPE, signage (including social distancing and symptoms), classroom design, staff and student numbers, routines (e.g. class size, breaks and lunches), staggered starts and end of the day and reducing the number of visitors to school. We are working on a detailed risk assessment and updated health and safety procedures which will be shared with staff, parents and reviewed by Governors before the school is reopened.

Latest guidance released on the 12th May 2020 on implementing protective measures in school settings

Effective infection protection and control

There are important actions that children and young people, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

In all education, childcare and social care settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions should be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- *minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges*
- *cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered*
- *ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach*
- *cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach*
- *minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)*

Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn

Education, childcare and children's social care settings and providers should use their local supply chains to obtain PPE. Where this is not possible, and there is unmet urgent need for PPE in order to operate safely, they may approach their nearest local resilience forum.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

Staff welfare

There are some staff who we have supported to remain at home due to underlying medical conditions and vulnerable family members. This may have an impact on staffing in June and moving forwards but we will continue to liaise closely with the staff and seek guidance to ensure that everyone in the school community is safe.

It is essential that staff feel safe and supported for any return to school and we will work closely with the team to ensure that all measures are in place to keep everyone safe. I have been sending out regular communications with staff to update everyone with the latest information and we are also arranging 20 minute zoom meetings with every member of staff to discuss their professional development needs at this time. We will complete a survey about any return to ensure that any concerns are listened to and addressed. Looking ahead to end of year appraisals, we are recommending that current objectives remain the same as when they were set but, in light of the school closure in response to Covid19, reviewers will need to acknowledge this in their comments as part of the mid-year review. We have requested further advice from HR in relation to appraisal and pay progression due to the situation with results and exams this year for Year 11 but we propose to allow staff to go through pay progression in October unless there were concerns prior to the 20th March.

Shielded and clinically vulnerable adults

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised not to work outside the home. We are strongly advising people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Staff in this position are advised not to attend work. Read COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable for more advice.

Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the Staying at home and away from others (social distancing) guidance have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson

planning or other roles which can be done from home. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.

Living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person

If a child, young person or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

If a child, young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable guidance, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home.

3. Home Schooling

Staff have set work each week for students to complete remotely through Google Classroom and we have also encouraged use of Bitesize resources, the Oak Academy along with support for mental health and well-being. These can be viewed on the school website <http://www.blaconhighschool.net/#> by clicking on Remote Learning, where we have included resources to support parents and students. About 70% of students have accessed the online resources although there has been great variance between years and groups of students submitting work. Addressing the 'lost learning' will be a priority for any return and key to this will be a huge investment in student mental health and well-being, in order to support students as they return to a new way of working. We plan to continue to invest in counselling and external support to ensure that all students receive the specialist help they need, along with recruiting additional support staff to help with this key area.

Year 11 Exams and Assessment Update

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic, and the decision to close schools at the end of March, all external exams were cancelled for this academic year. Following discussions between the DfE and Ofqual it was agreed that all students would be certificated for any courses they had followed based on teacher assessed grades. We have asked staff to use all the evidence available to them and their knowledge of the students to provide a holistic predicted grade for each subject. Evidence should include:

- classwork/homework
- internal test scores
- mock exam results
- coursework
- attendance/ Period 6 attendance
- attitude to learning

Once predicted grades have been agreed we have also been asked to provide a rank order of students to help with external standardisation. Again, these judgements should be holistic and take into account the range of evidence

that staff have at their disposal to come to an overall judgement. The latest bulletin from Ofqual states that no information will be collected from schools until at least 1st June and that more information on the process will be made available shortly. The links below provide some further information on both of these points.

Example - If within a subject the predicted grades state that 8 students would have been most likely to achieve a grade 4 at GCSE, they should rank those 8 students from 1 (the most secure/most likely to achieve the grade) to 8 (the least secure/least likely). This process should be repeated for every grade level.

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2020/04/09/arrangements-for-summer-2020/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK2T7wcPmvU&feature=youtu.be>

The rank order is to support the DfE in their statistical analysis of this year's outcomes. They need to make sure that this year's grades match the normal distribution curve and therefore they will use our predictions along with other data (3 year trend in school, KS2 scores, National averages) to ensure this happens. This might mean that students at some grade boundaries are moved up whilst others are moved down. There is an assumption that all schools will experience some grade alteration – we don't know which student, in which subject or at what grade. There is an appeals process which schools can submit once the results have been released and there will be an opportunity for students to re-sit some exams in the autumn if they wish although the details of this are not yet available.

Communication with parents and students

During the week leading up to the closure, I started a daily Head's update for parents on the website and through social media to keep parents and carers informed as information was becoming available. I have since posted regular updates and messages to parents, sent letters to all Year 11 students explaining the situation with their grades and all tutors are in the process of contacting every student by email or phone to touch base with them. On the 15th May, I had the opportunity to feed back to the DfE in a phone interview, my views on the issues and challenges surrounding Covid19 and planning for the future.

This is certainly not the sort of Head's Report I was expecting to write at this time, but we look forward to the time when our school community can be together again.

Rachel Hudson

Headteacher

