



LGS Headlines

23 October 2020



Dear Parents

Well, it has certainly been a half term with a difference.....

When I last wrote to you we were just back after the summer break, with everyone anxious to see how the 'new normal' would work out. We were getting used to the new routines of sanitisation and cleaning, base rooms and staggered break and lunch times. Students were returning to school, perhaps with a level of anxiety about how things would be, but clearly very glad to be able to see their friends again, and even pleased to be back in 'normal' lessons....!

The last few weeks have been difficult. For students, there is less variety in their daily routine, with many based in the same room for different lessons. There is less to do outside lessons as we have not been able to offer our usual range of extracurricular activities. They have less space to circulate and 'let off steam' at break and lunch. Some of our students have found it quite difficult to re-adapt to learning in a class of 30 again. For our teachers, lots of routine things take longer, they are constantly moving round the school, and frustrated at not being able to provide students with the close individual support they would like to because of the need to maintain social distancing.

On the other hand, there is much to celebrate and be proud of. The majority of students have engaged really well with lessons, especially those in the upper years of the school working towards examination qualifications. There is a lot of really good work taking place and students are making progress. Attendance has been excellent. Compliance with the coronavirus restrictions, routines and rules has been impressive. Above all, staff have enjoyed being back with the students in the classroom.

As you know, we have had to deal with a small number of confirmed COVID-19 cases. However, the controls we have put in place have meant that we have been able to keep the numbers of students sent home for self isolation to a minimum. As the national and local situation continues to develop, further cases are inevitable, and this newsletter gives some further detail about our contingency plans to provide remote education.

So, as we pause for a much-needed half term break for everyone I wish you and your families well.

Mr J Constable - Headteacher

**To contact us, please phone 01753 598300 or email
school@lgs.slough.sch.uk.**

**This email address is continually monitored and your query will be passed on
to the most appropriate member of staff.**

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Updates

Keeping us all safe - thank you

Our students have been very good at following the routines we have put in place for their safety. Fewer students are arriving before 8.00am and having to queue unnecessarily outside the school gate. Face mask wearing is near-universal, and students follow the routines with regard to hand sanitisation and cleaning of surfaces and equipment where this is required.

Thank you for your support in encouraging them to follow the rules.

Student attendance

As you know, the Government made it very clear that school attendance is a legal requirement for children who are registered with a school. We are very pleased to report that our student attendance level this term has been very high. If you remove self-isolation from the figures, the levels of attendance are certainly in line with what is normally expected at this time of year.

Thank you for the confidence you therefore have in us and your willingness to send your children into school despite the inevitable concerns you will have.

Tier 2 COVID restrictions

Slough has now joined the London boroughs in being placed in Tier 2 of the Government's three tiers of coronavirus restrictions. These restrictions come into effect in Slough from midnight on Friday 23rd October.

Schools and universities remain open when a region is placed in Tier 2, so there are few practical implications for staff or for students.

However, here is a reminder of what the Tier 2 restrictions mean:

- People are prohibited from socialising with anybody outside their household or support bubble in any **indoor** setting.
- The 'rule of six' continues to apply for socialising **outdoors**, for instance in a garden or public space like a park.
- Travel is permitted to amenities that are open, for work or to access education, but people are advised to **reduce** the number of journeys where possible.

Parking - again!

This year we have had more complaints from local residents about parents parking than we have ever had before.

Despite several reminders, the issues continue, and are due to a small number of parents who are spoiling the reputation of the majority.

The following notes are repeated from the previous newsletter.....

We strongly encourage parents to park some distance away from the school where possible.

We routinely ask local residents to contact the police if they find their driveways blocked or if parents park inconsiderately.

We will also take registration numbers and report drivers to the police for illegal parking (eg on double yellow lines) or any driving which could endanger our students.

We are encouraging all our students to be *responsible* and *caring*. We would be grateful if all parents could act in the same way towards our local residents.



Updates

Closing the COVID gap

An understandable concern for many parents is whether there is an ongoing impact from being out of school for so long in the summer term. What have students missed out on? What do they need to do to 'catch up'?

We believe that the majority of students coped well with the school closure and completed most of the work they were set during that time. Of course, they will have missed out on some subject content and on the classroom experience with its opportunities for debate, discussion, group work and immediate feedback. In some subjects, it was clearly not possible to do any practical work.

We are not talking about 'catching up' in school. Instead we are talking about 'closing the COVID gap'. This means making sure that by the end of the year - or by the public examinations for those in Years 11 and above - students are where they should be and that any gaps in their knowledge, understanding or practical skill development are addressed.

Closing the gap is a process, not an event, and will look different for different students in different subjects. In some cases, the gaps can be closed through refinements to the curriculum content and changes to the sequencing of teaching. For some students, our normal interventions and support will be enough. For others, some more specific and focused support will be needed. The government has provided an element of additional funding to schools to support this over the remainder of this year.

Over the last few weeks subject teams have been carrying out a range of assessments, some formal, others informal. Next half term we will begin to put in place specific interventions for those students identified as needing some further ongoing help to ensure they get to where they need to be.

Changes to Parent Teacher Consultations (PTCs)

We have invested in a new system to manage PTCs. The SchoolCloud software helps organize PTC appointment times and virtual meetings with teachers, so that we can run an entire PTC online.

- About 3 weeks before your son or daughter's year groups has their PTC, we will send you a link to the software. You will need to sign up and create an account.
- Around two weeks before the PTC, you will be able to request specific appointments for your highest priority subjects. Teachers can also prioritise appointments with parents they particularly want to see.
- A week before the PTC you can make all the other appointments you wish.
- On the day, you attend your online appointments using any device with a camera and microphone.



Parents' evenings, simplified





Building update

Progress on the new building

Over the last two months the construction company Wates has made spectacular progress on the second phase of the school rebuild. The steel frame for the new main building was completed in just four weeks from the start of term, and was marked by an informal ceremony of signing the last beam - see the next page for some pictures.

Significant work has also taken place on the landscaping of the central circulation area, and on the two new netball/tennis courts. We are expecting that these areas will be released to us later this term.

The photographs below show recent progress.





Building update

'Topping out' the new main building

An informal 'topping out' was held to mark the completion of the steel framework of the new main building. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and our senior students Naman, Carolyn and Sneha, along with School Council representatives from other year groups and construction workers from Wates, signed the last steel beam which was later bolted into position to complete the frame.





Remote education

What do we have to provide?

Following the national school closure in the summer term, there is a serious concern that students who are forced to remain at home due to coronavirus may be further disadvantaged in their learning.

Department for Education has now made it a legal requirement for schools to put in place immediate remote education where a class, group or small number of students need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring students to remain at home.

What does 'remote education' mean?

If some students are in school but others are self isolating at home, the aim is to bring some of the benefits of classroom teaching to those at home. This would involve a blend of work set through ClassCharts together with live-streaming of important elements of lessons, the provision of recordings, or the opportunity for students to interact directly with their teachers via video or chat.

In the case of a full or partial school closure we would provide a complete online timetable in the first instance which would require students to follow their normal schedule of lessons which would be conducted through Microsoft Teams.

We are also planning for 'enhanced cover lessons' where the teacher is at home self-isolating, but able to work. The aim here is to provide some of the benefits of normal teaching to students in school and those at home self-isolating. Teachers would live-stream from home during the normal lesson time and support students with work set while another member of staff supervises the class.

We are very aware that working on screen can be very intensive for students and staff. In the case of a local lockdown school closure, teachers would be asked to deliver live teaching for around 50% of the time they would spend with the class across a fortnight. This might mean 30 minutes out of every hour, or an hour's lesson followed by an hour's independent working.

What are the expectations of students?

Detailed instructions will be given to students as required. However, whether students are at home because of self isolation or because of school closure, the expectations of them are similar:

- ☑ Students would be expected to be online and to join the relevant Teams meeting at the beginning of every form period and the beginning of each of their lessons on every day.
- ☑ They must be properly dressed – school uniform is not required, but definitely no pyjamas!
- ☑ High standards of behaviour will be expected during any online session.
- ☑ Students should have their cameras on during live sessions to facilitate quality interaction but should sit themselves against a plain wall, blur their backgrounds or use a virtual background.
- ☑ They should complete work set for them on ClassCharts. Worked marked as 'classwork' should be done only during lesson time for that subject. Homework would be completed outside of the normal timetabled lessons.