



The William Henry Smith School

29.04.21

Dear Families,

I do hope you are well and are enjoying the relaxing of restrictions, being able to finally meet with family and friends and looking forward to the further opportunities after the 17th May. We are still operating under significant restrictions within school yet step-by-step we are moving towards a new sense of normality. We have returned to a number of specialist teaching subjects, now more people are permitted on site, with Construction, personalised maths Intervention and Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language specialists back within the classrooms. Weekend and holiday outreach will trickle back in due course. From 21st June we intend to resume a full timetable and incorporating the benefits and learning from our experiences.

I thank you for all the feedback provided to the Pandemic review of practice which was extremely positive and has helped us further shape our proposal. As with all opportunities to consult, your time is greatly appreciated and where families have raised specific comments, a member of the team will be in contact. I will be writing to you with more detail shortly but in the meantime please take the time to watch this video created by our staff, entitled 'The Perfect Storm' <https://youtu.be/eoQy8SYCnCs>

The decision has been taken that our Annual Prize Giving/Open Day will take place without families and visitors, and although restrictions will hopefully have been lifted fully, we feel it is too soon. We really don't want anyone's summer break to be interrupted by producing any unnecessary risk on the last day of term. Students will still participate in the event and families will be able to hopefully (access and permissions dependant) receive a link to a recording before the end of term.

We cannot wait to be able to once again enjoy the whole school community gathering together, and with that in mind I am pleased to let you know that we are planning a huge celebration in September to celebrate the schools' 60th anniversary and the hopeful departure of Covid!

The school annual holiday/camp week will also take place in the autumn term and finer details will be shared with families. We have a significant number of new and young students and careful planning is underway to provide them with carefully crafted daily experiences. We are still hopeful that the amazing pre-planned sailing trip will be able to go ahead before the summer break and for those students taking part, they have possibly a once in a life-time opportunity to sail as part of a working crew.

We are also planning an annual cycle of community festivals from our Quality of Life work and families will also be able to be involved remotely with these. Again, I will be sending you information on these exciting events in due course.

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Some of you may already have heard that Martin Gibson, Deputy Principal, will be *retiring* this summer from his work at William Henry Smith after contributing significantly to the school for over 30 years. This does not mean he is at retirement age of course, purely that he wishes to give more quality of time to his personal interests. Martin's role is pivotal within the school, and therefore a significant amount of succession work has been going on behind the scenes for some time, including the restructuring of the senior leadership team and recruitment to create additional capacity.

Martin has played a critical part in the development of the school over a number of years. In the earlier days, he saw the need for and drove the implementation of therapeutic services into our school...we now feel privileged to have a very strong team of Creative Psychotherapists, Occupational Health and Speech and Language practitioners, Family Support, Sensory Integration, and Forensic and Clinical Psychology. More recently, Martin has developed outstanding relationships with Local Authority SEND Leads across the country, and these partnerships together with a strong vision for reaching out and impacting wider than our core school offer, mean that we now have a vibrant offer through BEST (Bespoke Education, Support and Tuition) which continues to grow, and a Children's Home in the planning.

I know many families will want to thank Martin, and wish him all the best, and I am pleased to let you know that he will be at our 60th anniversary celebration in September.

I do hope this update has been useful and I look forward to sharing our exciting plans in my next communication with families.

Best wishes,



Sue Ackroyd
Principal

