



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

22 May 2020

Dear Parents,

School reopening

I have meant to write to you over the last week but I have been holding out for some clarity in the government's position on schools that I could communicate to you; I have given up on this exercise in despair. Guidance on selective, phased school reopening this term has, unfortunately, become more unclear as the politicised unions interfere and, as is their intention, disrupt the decision-making process.

It is increasingly likely that our Year 10 and 12 pupils are best served by pushing through to the end of this term with remote learning with the intention of **opening fully to all year groups on schedule in September**. However, we stand ready to offer optional appointments with key staff in the last few weeks of term, available in person if that is the way the guidance goes and you wish it, but always and anyway this 'face time' will be available remotely on Teams.

We have now been blessed with a growing body of scientific evidence that the risk of harm to young people from Covid-19 is negligible. The Charity is opening St Andrew's Prep to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on 1st June and will be putting in place safety measures to reduce the risk still further. We can be confident that, whatever the regulations, we will be well placed to open in September in a manner that will be safe for your children.

Internal exam season

When we return, we will ensure that pupils have timely academic assessment so that we can ensure that any gaps that have emerged can be quickly rectified. Your children need a holiday from schoolwork and the screen, so please do not encourage any revision for internal exams until the fortnight before the start of term. At that point current Year 12 (Lower Sixth) pupils should put their mind to doing revision and Year 10 might also be advised to do a bit of work. Their teachers, of course, will be giving advice on the details.

Eastbourne College internal exam schedule Michaelmas 2020

Current Year 12 going into Year 13: a formal exam week will take place in week 3 (beginning 14 September) with the Upper Sixth teaching timetable suspended.

Current Year 10 going into Year 11: there will be formal department-based assessments early in the Michaelmas term to check on progress through the period of remote learning, well in advance of January 2021 mocks.

Current Year 9 going into Year 10: guided learning hours will be of much more value than losing teaching time to exams, so no formal exams until the normal end-of-term exams in the Michaelmas term. Departments will conduct assessments in the early part of the Michaelmas term for setting purposes and a progress check.

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Expeditions, trips, tours and educational visits:

Please rest assured that we are doing all we can to secure full refunds for trips cancelled due to lockdown. We are trying to get resolution from tour companies but many are struggling to come to grips with cash flow issues as they in turn claw back money outlays to their providers. Some companies are issuing credit notes with an expiry date (in some cases as far out as January 2021), after which a refund will be made.

As for forthcoming trips, we are reviewing our position on every trip currently being planned. Some, such as the summer Duke of Edinburgh award scheme expeditions have tentatively been planned for October. Except where money has already been placed as deposits prior to lockdown, we will not be committing any more funds without further clarity and your agreement.

Holiday provision

We very much hope that the provision throughout the Easter holiday and this term for key workers at St Andrew's Prep has been of help to those parents obliged to keep working on the front line through the worst of this crisis. I am told by Gareth Jones that the College-age pupils taking advantage of this have worked quietly, independently and effectively down at the prep school and I am grateful that they were such good ambassadors. The children will thoroughly deserve a break from this routine, and **this facility will end on Friday 3 July**. In case of use to you, St Andrew's Prep does offer a holiday club for EYFS children. This runs throughout the summer excluding bank holidays. Please contact Catherina Ashford (SAadmissions@standrewsprep.co.uk) for more details and pricing information.

With the fullest understanding that days can melt into each other with scant regard to timetables and the normal rhythm of the school year, I wish you a happy half term and look forward to writing again when guidance on school reopening becomes clearer or, more likely, to update you on our progress in navigating through the regulatory fog as best we can.

Best wishes,



Tom Lawson
Headmaster