



# Pershire High School

Quality education  
for all in a  
challenging,  
supportive and  
safe environment

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope you and your family are well. We have been delighted this morning to 'Welcome Back' some of our Year 10 and Year 12 students, with more returning every day this week, as per the latest Government guidance. It is so good to see them. Needless to say, we are looking forward to seeing all of our students when we are allowed to do so. We are missing having all students in school very much.

Apologies for the delay in publishing today's communication, but I wanted to be able to report on our day. You can see from the photographs below how very different things are for students and staff compared to what they are used to, in order to comply with all of the guidance on how to avoid spreading the virus and keep everyone safe.

I am delighted to say that all students have responded excellently throughout their morning in school and my thanks to all colleagues in ensuring a smooth transition back to school for all students returning in the coming days.



A socially distanced arrival



A' Level Physics in the Library



GCSE Science in the Drama Studio



GCSE English in the Hall

Please could I ask that any changes to travel arrangements for Year 10 and Year 12 students, from those given in our recent survey, are communicated with the school via [office@pershire.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@pershire.worcs.sch.uk). Some of the bus companies are running services for very small numbers of students each day, and are keen to do so, but it is unhelpful when students are not available for collection, to take either to or from school, due to a change in arrangements as the bus could have been redirected accordingly had the information been known in advance.



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In addition, I am appreciative of the flexibility of students and parents/carers where a bus is only available at 3.30pm, when school finishes at 1.20pm for Years 10 and 12; students can be collected at this time or remain supervised in school until the bus arrives.

The students attending will have noticed some changes to the school site, as some areas previously occupied by lockers have been converted to provide much needed under-cover seating for cold and wet weather.



The Shelter, awaiting seating in the centre aisle



Part of the PE corridor

All students were asked to empty their lockers when they left the school prior to lockdown; contents of lockers retrieved during their removal have been retained for collection when students return. As all lockers have been removed, there will be more substantive information when school opens for all students regarding our arrangements for students requiring any form of storage when in school.

Please find below the latest updates relevant to our current situation, which includes:

- *Awarding calculated grades: GCSEs, AS and A levels summer 2020 – Years 10 to 13 where applicable*
- *General qualifications - autumn series – Years 10 and 13 where applicable*
- *2021 exams and assessments – Years 9, 10 & 12 where applicable*
- *Year 9 Options subjects*
- *National Autistic Society Forum*
- *The Isabella Trust*
- *BBC SEND Support*
- *Careers Bulletin (Year 11)*
- *UK University Search virtual Fair: (Years 11 & 12)*

### **Latest Government Guidance**

*Awarding calculated grades: GCSEs, AS and A levels summer 2020 – Years 10 to 13*

Friday saw the deadline for all examination centres to submit this year's centre assessed grades and rank order information to the examination boards. I know that many students would prefer to have taken their exams, but that was obviously not possible in the current circumstances. Instead, everyone across the education sector has worked together so that students don't miss out because their exams have been cancelled. I would like to take this opportunity to thank publically my colleagues for their role in making these judgements objectively and fairly for all students and ensuring we are able to submit them well within the permitted deadline. I would also like to thank parents/carers for adhering to the expectation of not contacting the school in relation to this process and for your support for my colleagues in what has been an unprecedented process as they strive as always to do their very best for all students.

*General qualifications - autumn series – Years 10 to 13*

An important feature of the overall arrangements this summer is the planned additional exam series in the autumn, which will provide an opportunity for students who were unable to receive a calculated

grade this summer, and others who would like the opportunity to improve their grade, to take exams. Ofqual's consultation on the arrangements for the autumn series closed last week and they expect to publish final decisions before the end of the summer term. Ofqual received a large number of responses and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gave them their views. There will be a number of logistical challenges schools will face in the autumn, along with the potential for public health restrictions to impact on the planned series. Ofqual have promised to continue to talk to the sector, and prepare for a range of contingencies, as they finalise their approach and provide further information in good time about the next steps.

#### *2021 exams and assessments – Years 9, 10 & 12*

I have received a communication from Sally Collier, Chief Regulator at Ofqual, recognising students expecting to take exams next year, and their parents and teachers, are concerned about the disruption to teaching and learning caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. She notes that her overriding aim is to ensure exams and assessments are as fair as possible and take into account any public health requirements and the well-being of students. Ofqual are working closely with the Department for Education, exam boards and groups representing teachers, schools, colleges and students, to consider carefully a range of possible measures. They are planning to publish for consultation, before the end of term, their proposals for next year. Ofqual will confirm their decisions as soon as possible to allow time for schools to prepare.

### **Supporting student home learning**

#### *Year 9 Options subjects*

I hope the transition from last Monday to focusing on Option subjects chosen for GCSE is working well for our Year 9 students. As a reminder; although most subject groups have moved to a particular day of the week to teach live lessons (either a lunchtime or after school equivalent to prevent clashes) rather than the existing Year 9 timetable, Art and Geography are continuing with their pre-half term provision of using existing timetabled lessons to continue the transition to GCSE studies.

### **SEND Support and Guidance**

#### *National Autistic Society Forum*

The National Autistic Society are a great resource to use and they have put together a forum page. On the forum, people can raise questions or concerns and get help and support from other families and professionals. You can even offer support on other people's thread. During these uncertain times, it is good to talk and remember that as a community we can work together to support our students as best as we can.

You can access the forum by clicking this link: <https://community.autism.org.uk/?Redirected=true>

#### *The Isabella Trust*

The Isabella Trust is a registered charity which aims to provide information, support, training courses and workshops to parents and carers of autistic children and children who experience sensory processing difficulties.

Website: <https://www.theisabellatrust.org/>

Twitter: @Isabella\_Trust

#### *BBC SEND Support*

The BBC have put together a range of resources that you can access from home on this SEND Support website. It contains information on:

- Supporting wellbeing
- Activities to focus on mindfulness
- Tips for home learning and isolation
- Personal stories from parents

This is a great resource and can be accessed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh9v382>

As you will have seen in the Student Bulletin, we have been focusing on life-skills based activities for students. We hope that this has been useful.

### **Post-16 and Post-18 progression route support**

*Careers Bulletin (Year 11 & Year 13 focus)*

This week's 'Careers Bulletin' has been made available to all students via Epraise and the Shared Area on the school network. There is a spotlight on Sport and Exercise Psychologists as well as a full programme of VTALKs (virtual talks) from 'Speakers for School's during this week. The talks include Baroness Young discussing the importance of arts in society, Julian Baggini exploring the philosophy of personal identity, Dan Snow discussing the importance of history and lessons we can learn, producer and commercial film maker Dean Beswick sharing his top three life lessons to help students prepare for their future, Mohsin Zaidi & Jessica Kellgren-Fozard talk about how to embrace your intersectionality and Charlotte Stacey discusses the practicalities of apprenticeships.

*UK University Search virtual Fair: (Years 11 & 12)*

I would like to draw your attention to an opportunity, particularly for our Year 12 students, taking place on

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June from 12.00pm – 6.00pm. Students can explore universities and colleges from across the UK, chat directly to ambassadors, download prospectuses and take part in live webinars – it is free and all in one place on: <https://ukuniversitysearch.vfairs.com/>. This opportunity was advertised initially to students in last week's Student Bulletin.

As always, thank you for your messages of support, particularly in relation to our efforts to reopen the school more widely from today. Next week I am hoping to share an update on the developments to our new English block and Library which, despite understandable delays, is progressing well and will open in September.

Yours faithfully,



Phil Hanson  
Headteacher