

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

REF: HT/tlb

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you are safe and well, given the rising rates of infection within our local community. The impact of lockdown on our friends, families and community will begin to be felt as the reality of the news sinks in.

Five days feels like a long time in education, and I have some updates to my letter of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, following government announcements that have been made over the last couple of days.

### Student return

As you know, we are now all involved in a national effort to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus and the current lockdown is aimed directly at stopping the spread of the virus before the NHS is overwhelmed. To that end we must minimise the number of people in school; the more people circulating within school, the more chance there is of spreading the virus, and students and staff taking the virus home. I'm afraid this means that Year 11 and 13 students will not be returning to school as planned on the 11<sup>th</sup> January and that most students will be working from home for the coming weeks, rather than returning to school on the 18<sup>th</sup> January. The Prime Minister has made it clear that schools are expected to be operating in remote-learning mode until at least February half term and we launched our online provision yesterday.

### The Hubs

Newquay Tretherras is not closed. We are open to Vulnerable Students and Children of Critical Workers. Provision in school is not the same as it was under the first lockdown. Students who do come to school are supervised in an ICT room by cover staff and they take part in the same live-streamed lessons and complete the same work on TEAMS and Class Charts as students who are at home. Students should wear warm coats, as our well-ventilated rooms are colder than normal.

We have a separate SEND Hub for children with an EHCP based in the library in a separate 'bubble' and supported by Learning Support staff and staff volunteers.

We also have a Learning Centre Hub for a small number of students who need some extra pastoral support, which is staffed by members of our Welfare Team.

### Online learning

Most frequently asked questions can be answered by visiting the Online Teaching and Learning tab on our website. Student attendance online yesterday was very good, and we will continue to monitor attendance in lessons. Heads of Year and pastoral staff are available to support parents and carers; please make contact by email via the usual addresses. Useful contact numbers are on our website if any family is experiencing difficulties or if you have any safeguarding concerns. In the last lockdown, some families genuinely struggled with online learning, especially when there were multiple children and adults in the home. If you need to talk to us at all, or need some Hub support, please do get in touch. Technical support is available on [ITSevices@tretherras.net](mailto:ITSevices@tretherras.net) and our reception is staffed all day, from 8am until 3pm, by our administration team in The Quay reception.

### Examinations

Media speculation and lack of DfE clarity regarding the cancellation of exams has been unhelpful for students who have vocational exams in the next week, or for our Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students who are working towards their public examinations this summer.

Last night the Prime Minister said that "We recognise that this will mean that it's not possible or fair for **all** exams to go ahead this summer as normal. The Education Secretary will work with Ofqual to put in alternative arrangements."

We are expecting a further announcement confirming arrangements for examinations and assessment by the Secretary of State tomorrow. In the meantime, students who have January vocational exams, should keep revising. We will ensure we keep you informed.

Students in Year 11, 12 and 13 have received a separate letter today and our message to them is clear: learning must continue in order to equip them with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to progress to their next level of education or training and in preparation for their working lives. We expect **all** students to engage in their online lessons:

- Attending lessons online this half term will be vital - the work students complete and the learning they receive will count towards a final grade (however that is finally determined) for our examination year groups.
- It is likely that a range of assessments and work, possibly some form of formal assessment or examination, will determine final grades.
- Further information will be sent to students as soon as we hear from the exam boards.

### **Free School Meals**

All parents and carers of children entitled to free school meals have received an email today outlining arrangements for food vouchers, the same as the Christmas holiday scheme. Please contact us if you have not received your email.

### **Testing**

We are continuing to plan for lateral flow testing in school and parents and carers of Hub students will receive a letter tomorrow seeking consent for testing to take place. The plans for the wider school population are currently on hold in the light of last night's announcement.

### **Staffing**

With the introduction of 'live' online lessons, as well as staffing the Hub, the SEN Hub and the Learning Centre, staffing Tretherras will be challenging should members of staff fall ill themselves. We are fortunate that many members of staff have volunteered in their planning and preparation time to ensure we can support all Hub students. As members of staff have become ill, they have worked as far as they are able to deliver their lessons from home. Should this not be possible in the coming weeks, we will ensure that appropriate work is uploaded to Class Charts and that students are informed.

I'll update you again when we have more news. In the meantime, please get in touch if we can help or support you in any way.

Yours sincerely

**MRS S FAIRBAIRN**  
**Executive Headteacher**