

The Priory School

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Headteacher: C Panting



10th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Dorking is fortunate to have two good secondary schools that work closely with all of the schools in Dorking through the Dorking Schools Partnership, and in particular during the current COVID pandemic dealing with the challenges facing our schools.

Now that the Government has announced that secondary schools will be starting to take small groups of Year 10 and 12 students from June 15th, our two schools have been liaising and sharing plans.

The practical arrangements for this are complex as everyone is determined to reduce any risk of increasing the rate of transmission resulting from extending the opening of schools. These arrangements may differ slightly between the schools resulting from particular features of each school and its site. The Heads will be communicating with staff and parents in each of the schools with the details of these plans.

We wanted to take this opportunity as Chairs of Governors to pay tribute to the enormous efforts being made by the dedicated management and staff of both schools who are working relentlessly weekdays and weekends to deliver the best education they can in these difficult circumstances.

We also wanted to highlight the complexity and challenges in the current situation as we, as Governors, consider and assess the many factors. We all want students back in full-time education just as soon as conditions safely allow but we recognise that the scientific evidence and advice means that this is some way off. In the meantime, it is important to be taking small, careful steps, especially with those students who will be taking exams next year.

Like you, many of our Governors are parents with children currently at our schools and both Governing bodies are united in putting the safety and welfare of our staff and students above all. It has been so helpful to the staff in both schools that parents have recognised what a difficult situation it is for so many and have supported the actions of the schools and their staff. There is a wide recognition that the moves out of lockdown are much more complex and potentially contentious than the swift move into lockdown at the end of March.

We would urge parents to continue to show the same understanding and support as they have so far and be assured that as the final decision on relaxing restrictions on students attending rests with the Governors, we will not be taking unnecessary risks as we seek to get students back into school.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Keep your families safe and well.

With our sincere good wishes,

Stuart Murray
Chair of Governors
The Priory School

Terry McDonald
Chair of Governors
The Ashcombe School