



Blatchington Mill School

Involvement, Achievement & Care

www.blatchingtonmill.org.uk

Dear Blatch families,

We appreciate how challenging it may be for families to manage the uncertainty of our current situation and we are genuinely appreciative of everyone's understanding and support as we navigate a situation where the timeframes for the resolution are out of our control.

Our absolute priority is to bring all our students back into school as soon as we are safely able to do so and we are working closely with the local authority to make this a reality as soon as possible. We are very grateful for the support and assistance of the officers at Brighton and Hove City Council - we are working particularly closely with colleagues in the Property and Design Team, part of The Economy, Environment and Culture Directorate.

Update on the school site

We want to share as much information as we are able to and we have now received written reports that have given us much more detail on the impact of the fire on our school site - these indicate which parts of the affected area are structurally safe and give guidance on the remedial works needed to secure those areas that are not, for example, the stairs between our Design and Food rooms need to be propped before they can be used at all.

The fire has affected a significant section of our school east of East Reception, this area includes our kitchen, canteen, RIC, Design and Food teaching areas. In addition two toilet blocks, the medical room, our Sports Hall and the East Gym have been rendered inaccessible. The impact on these areas ranges from complete destruction through fire, significant damage from smoke and water used in controlling the fire and mild smoke damage with a heavy odour making the air not safe for anyone with less than robust respiratory health.

Our school facilities team is working hard with contractors to support assessment surveys from contractors who have been appointed for electrics, fire alarm, water and gas.



The priority at this stage is for these companies to isolate damaged and dangerous parts of the system, i.e. water pipes, gas ducting and cable work so that the rest of the supply in these utilities can be reinstated. At that point we will be able to open up the school building between Student Services and East Reception, therefore allowing use of approximately 24 more classrooms and significantly more toilet facilities. This would enable us to return to all students and staff being back onsite.

We have been in conversation today with senior officers in the directorate and they share our aim of having this phase in place by the end of the half term break (by Monday 19th February). It must be emphasised that this is the target and is seen as realistic but as our school is a complex structure, built across a couple of decades and amended on a rolling basis, we know that there may be complexities to meeting this timeframe.

The phase following this will be to reinstate the catering area so that we can return to providing hot meals to all students and after that we will be focusing on restoring access to our PE venues and the RIC. Alongside this we will be managing the significant works required to reinstate practical teaching spaces for Design and Food.

Considerations beyond the services described above are our network infrastructure, the catering software and all of the resources that need replacing. All of these areas of work will be overlapping but we are sharing here the priorities that we are working with to make our return to a safe and fully operational school as quickly and effectively as possible.

Plans for next week - w/c Monday 5th February

As you may have realised from the details shared above we are not going to be able to have all our students back onsite next week. We share the disappointment and frustration that we know our families may feel about this but as you can see from the complexity of services needing to be restored we cannot yet access the areas that will enable us to have all our students safely back onsite.

We have, as you'd expect, explored with the local authority all other options to having more of our students on site at one time but these are not viable either logistically or in terms of safety. Our priority therefore is to provide the most effective continuity of learning for our students. We will continue to review and adapt our remote learning to ensure it is providing students with opportunities to interact with their teachers and peers, as well as continue to follow the normal curriculum.

In making decisions about which year groups are onsite each day we are trying to ensure



parity across year groups, whilst also ensuring that our Year 11 students are supported as effectively as possible in the run up to their GCSEs.

Here is our learning provision at Blatch for the week of 5th February, 2024:

Year	Face to Face at School	Remote Learning at Home
11	Monday - Thursday 8:50 - 3:00	Friday
10	Wednesday - Friday 8:50 - 3:00	Monday Tuesday
9	Tuesday - Wednesday 8:50 - 3:00	Monday Thursday Friday
8	Monday - Tuesday 8:50 - 3:00 Friday 8:50 - 3:00	Wednesday Thursday
7	Monday 8:50 - 3:00 Thursday - Friday 8:50 - 3:00	Tuesday Wednesday

Communication with us

A reminder that all our updates regarding the current situation can be found on our website here: [Letters to families](#).

If you have any individual queries or concerns please direct them either to your child's year team or teachers (depending on the query) so that we can support your child as needed.

Best wishes,

Ms Claydon.

**Headteacher
Blatchington Mill School**

