

21 October 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

## COVID Update

I am delighted with how our pupils continue to respond to new systems and restrictions. Whilst we have been working hard to ensure that school remains as 'normal' and enjoyable as possible, the resilience and maturity shown by our pupils (despite a whole raft of safety measures), continues to be impressive.

**As you know, it is always my aim to be open and transparent with parents / carers, so I am keen to explain some of the current circumstances and ongoing decisions.**

Like many schools across the country, we have had a number of confirmed Covid-19 cases since our return to school in September. However, we are a school of 2500 pupils and the numbers of positive cases continue to be a tiny proportion of our overall school population. Public Health England have confirmed that they are happy with our robust measures; similarly, our success in containing cases and preventing school based transmission so far, is viewed as a testament to the risk management procedures that we have put in place.

**With each confirmed case we are duty bound to seek advice from the DfE or the Health Protection Team, and must operate entirely within the advice given.**

We are trying hard to avoid sending home entire year groups or even entire class groups, by spending a considerable amount of time identifying close contacts or those sat in a classroom within two metres of a confirmed case. Whilst such procedures reduce the overall numbers being sent home, this is still unavoidable and pupils will sometimes need to be sent home to self-isolate.

Frustratingly, this must also happen even in cases where a pupil has been asked to self-isolate previously. Indeed, a number of our children have had to self-isolate several times, requiring them to miss a significant amount of time in school. This is really difficult for our families and we completely understand that this causes you significant issues given work commitments and childcare requirements. **We are always really sorry to have to send any child home to self-isolate**, but we have a moral and statutory obligation to follow to the letter the advice we are given. Ultimately, such decisions are about doing whatever we can to keep our community safe and it is not a matter of choice for the school.

In line with all schools, our ability to remain open to all year groups is dependent on staffing levels. This is to ensure the safety and quality of provision for all our pupils. As a large school, we have been able to manage this situation so far, even when we have had a number of staff who have been required to self-isolate due to Track and Trace instructions. We will continue to monitor this situation, but we may have to make difficult decisions to close selected year group bubbles if we are not able to adequately staff the school.

Cont/...

HEADTEACHER  
Matthew Partington

HEAD OF SECONDARY  
Jenny Hogarth

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER  
John Mattinson

## Calendar Events for the next half term

The current situation has regrettably meant that we are unable to offer many of the usual face-to-face events that would normally fill our school calendar.

- Parent Consultation Evenings will run differently and take the form of 'Meet the Form Tutor' events.
- Year 8 will run in two halves of the Year Group on Tuesday 10 November (original date) and Thursday 12 November 2020.
- Year 9 will run in two halves of the Year Group on Tuesday 1 December (original date) and Wednesday 2 December 2020.
- Many of the calendared Performing Arts events have had to be cancelled. However, our staff are currently exploring the possibility of virtual events, so that we can still celebrate the skills and talents of our amazing pupils

*Specific details about these and other future events will be shared in due course and in light of the latest guidance and local infection rates.*

## Masks

As you are aware, we had to change our position on masks in light of the changing government advice given Covid-19 infection rates across the Leeds.

The majority of pupils have been fantastic at remembering to bring masks with them on a daily basis. Unfortunately we have had to spend hundreds of pounds on supplying masks to pupils who forget to bring them having an impact on our school budget, which is already stretched to the limit due to current circumstances.

**After half term, I have made the decision that masks will now become a formal part of our uniform policy** (to be worn anywhere on the school site, except in classrooms). This means that codes will be given to pupils who do not bring a mask to school. *(For any families who are concerned about this from a financial point of view, please contact your child's Head of Year and a confidential arrangement will be made to supply a mask to your child free of charge.)*

We have been asking for a lot of understanding recently and I offer you heartfelt thanks for all your patience and support. This is particularly important given that current circumstances mean that we are being forced into making some tough decisions that we never thought we would have to make.

We will endeavour to keep you updated in light of changing circumstances or government guidance. I do hope that you and your family manage to have some relaxation over half term.

With very best wishes.

Yours faithfully



**Matthew Partington**  
Headteacher