

Wider reopening of schools

The most significant recent news was the announcement that the wider reopening of schools will not be before the 8th of March. I am sure you know that schools are not and have never been closed throughout the pandemic. Schools are undertaking a dual role providing face-to-face education for eligible vulnerable children and the children of critical workers whilst also providing home learning and maintaining contact with children learning at home. I am proud of and grateful to all our dedicated school staff for their hard work undertaking this dual role!! We also fully acknowledge how challenging home/remote schooling can be and we understand the continuing pressures parent/carers are experiencing.

Health and Wellbeing

Now more than ever, we feel that it is important that we all take time to reflect on and look after our mental health and wellbeing. You have received information earlier in the week about our new website page which offers suggestion and resources to support mental health and wellbeing. We hope you have taken the time to have a look and taken part in some of the suggestions.

DFE Guidelines

We have recently had a significant number of requests for critical worker places in school. I would like to remind you that the government guidance tells us that if you are working from home you must keep your child at home. This is to keep both families and staff as safe as possible. Please understand that on some occasions I have had to refuse places in school based on the fact a parent is working from home. Please appreciate that these are not easy decisions to make and are guided solely by DFE guidance. As a result of this can I request that you only contact school if your working situation has changed, and you are no longer working from home or able to keep your child safe at home.

February Half Term- School closed to all pupils

The Department for Education confirmed that schools will close to all pupils during February half term. Under the first lockdown, schools were asked to remain open during the holiday period but this is no longer the case. We are sorry for any inconvenience this causes to parents/carers whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response.

Contact tracing over the February half-term

Whilst schools are closed to all pupils during February half term, schools have been asked to undertake a role in contact tracing for pupils and staff. We will provide details of this in a subsequent letter and also on the Coronavirus section of the website.

Rapid Testing for School Staff

Rapid testing kits arrived last week in school so we are now offering testing to school staff (started on 31.1.21). This should help to reduce the rate of transmission from those being tested that have no symptoms but are infectious. Naturally, we will follow the procedures to carry out testing and communicate regularly with you if there are positive cases in school.

School Governance

During the pandemic, school governance has remained an integral part to the running of our successful school. The Governing body continue to meet virtually on a regular basis and the governors are a continual source of support during this challenging period. During my headship I have been fortunate to have had a supportive chair of governors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Scott for her dedication to our school and her help with my transition into headship. This year Mrs. Scott has decided to step down as chair but will remain on our board of governors. I am delighted to welcome Mrs. Sarah Campbell as our new chair of governors and Mr. Adam Stubbs as our vice chair of governors. I am looking forward to working with them both over the coming year, to further progress our school.

The Outlook

It is apparent that the current situation is placing great strain on so many people for so many different reasons. The constraints and sacrifices we are all being asked to make (for such long periods) is without recent precedent. I am sure that we all hope that the measures we are being asked to take and the roll out of vaccine will bring noticeable improvements in our lives and that children will return to school.

Thank you, once more, to staff, governors, parents, and carers for all you are doing to contribute to each child's learning and wellbeing; thank you too for protecting essential services and those most vulnerable to the harms of COVID-19.

Please stay safe, we look forward to welcoming you back to school at the earliest opportunity.

Yours Sincerely

David Harrison

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