



23rd October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we near the end of what has been a challenging half term, I write to thank you for the support you have given your child and the school over the past two months. We have successfully balanced the challenge of keeping pupils and staff as safe as possible during a global pandemic, whilst ensuring pupils have access to a full curriculum and high quality teaching.

As we move into half term 2 and the winter months, with the National Covid-19 situation worsening, I ask for your continued support with understanding the challenges the school is facing. Whilst we are doing the best we can, it is important to realise that it is far from 'business as usual' in school. It is more important than ever at this challenging time that we continue to work together in a strong partnership: pupils, parents and the school.

Considering the challenges that we are all facing, I have been extremely impressed with the way pupils have conducted themselves and coped with a number of changes since the start of September.

There are a few things to revisit and update following completion of our first half term:

First Ministers statement

Mr Drakeford has recently announced the Firebreak in Wales. This is to last from 6.00 pm on Friday 23rd October up to the start of Monday 9th November. The normal school half term runs from Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October. There is also a school INSET on Monday 2nd November.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are expected to attend school as normal from Tuesday 3rd November whereas pupils in Years 9-11 will be required to access their remote learning programme. There is more information about this in the section below. Our current understanding is that all year groups will be expected to attend school on Monday 9th November. If there are any changes to this, I will update you.

Face Masks

All people on the site are required to wear PPE. Staff are wearing visors and masks in certain areas and we expect pupils to wear their face coverings whilst moving through the corridors and congregating in communal areas. All pupils have been issued with several face coverings free of charge and I ask for your co-operation in highlighting the importance of bringing these to school and wearing them in communal areas. If there is an isolated incident where a pupil has lost or forgotten a face covering, we will issue one but, as of Tuesday the 3rd of November, there will be a charge.

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Any face coverings issued will be added up over a fortnight and a request will then be made to parents to cover the charge through Parentpay. It is much safer and easier for everybody if pupils remember to bring their face coverings.

Uniform

With community transmission rates increasing, we do not feel it is appropriate to open our PE changing rooms at this time. We do not want pupils to miss out on PE lessons so ask that pupils abide by the following uniform rules:

Full uniform should be worn every day – please access the website to check the requirements.

If your child has PE, they should wear PE kit to school. I accept that the weather will be colder over the coming weeks/months so pupils can wear jogging bottoms over their shorts / leggings but their PE shirt must be worn.

Remote / Blended Learning

Since September, we have been notified of 5 pupils testing positive for Covid-19. We have acted quickly and followed the advice from TTP. These cases are thought to be linked to community transmission and there has been no transmission through school which is encouraging. The down side to us trying to reduce the chance of transmission is that a number of pupils have had to self-isolate as a result of these cases. The remote learning approach that we have developed allows groups of pupils who have been asked to self-isolate to access their work and their teacher during their normal timetabled lessons.

The vehicle we are using for this is Microsoft Teams. All pupils have been set up in their teams and shown how to use it in their classes. There are user guides on our website for parents and pupils.

Whilst whole year groups are off school, all teachers (apart from those off school with illness) will be logged into their team to be on hand for any questions or queries about the work during their timetabled lesson. Registration periods will also be conducted, so all pupils will be expected to log into their form team at 8.30 in the morning.

We understand the difficulty and nothing replaces a pupil physically sitting in a lesson with a teacher in the class, however we ask that you support us to ensure your child is logged in at the appropriate times and is following the work set. Research has shown that the most effective approach is for pupils to get up at their normal time, get washed, dressed, have breakfast and get prepared for their learning – just as they would if they were attending school.

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If you have any concerns or difficulties, please contact us, we will help in any way possible.

There are a number of links to useful educational sites in the 'Learning from Home' section on the website.

Communication

If parents are not receiving emails from the school, can you please contact us to check email details.

As always, I would like to thank you for your support and if you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate person at the school.

Warmest regards

Shaun Clarke
Headteacher

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