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Thursday 5th November 2020

Dear Families,

Day 1 of the National Lockdown and although we are still here doing what we do, I nearly had to make the decision to close two classes for today due to staff absences.

We have a great staff team and so whenever any of them have to have time off it is really difficult for them, as they are hugely committed to their role and to our children. However, we are all human. We do get ill, we might, and do get tracked and have to self-isolate, and if we are parents of younger children who have been asked to isolate due to cases in their schools, this is another unforeseen impact on the running of our school.

I wanted to reiterate that the very LAST thing I want to do is to close classes or bubbles and I really only want this to be the solution if it is needed for isolation and minimising spread. On saying that, we have 11 members of staff absent for various reasons today and the only available option at one point was to close two classes.

Fortunately, we do have amazing staff and we were able to be flexible with groupings and timetables in order to keep open and also and just as importantly, keep safe. I will NEVER compromise the health and safety of our children and so if there is a need to close, I will do so with this justification. I have been in contact with my Governors this morning due to today's situation and they are in agreement if this decision is needed.

There are bubbles in school where staffing remains fairly constant, and teaching and learning continues as planned. There are also other areas where staff absences have struck most and so we endeavour to keep our children as safe, well and as comfortable as possible, with that being the priority. I hope that you understand the need for this 'off timetable' approach occasionally if staffing and situation dictates that this is the only way we can remain open.

I wanted to make contact with you again as one of the pressures behind the staffing today was the weighted feeling of letting down families; of having children confused as to why they can't come into school and because we are trying so hard to keep this virus out, that it feels incredibly disappointing to have to close due to other factors.



“Valuing every achievement”



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I have always been very open and honest with you and so wanted to raise this current issue and also forewarn that this could be a reason for a last minute change to your child's expected day.

The easiest of the difficult decisions to close, will be if anyone tests positive and we track back 48 hours to contacts in school. The hardest will be if it's down to staff absence and we have to keep a class at home in order to ensure pupils safety. If this is the case, work will be on the online platform ready for them.

Please refer to yesterday's letter and our Operations Booklet where we clearly state what we do if a child displays symptoms in school, and what we expect our families to do, whether this is a popular decision or not, it is a requirement. It also gives my contact details phone and email, should you need to let me know if:

You or anyone in the household develops symptoms

You or anyone in the house has to have a test

You or anyone in the house has to self-isolate due to contact

Myself and my Governors would like to offer thanks to our wonderful staff who continue to work so hard to keep our children safe and well.

We would also like to thank you as our families for your continued support and understanding at a time that we recognise is not easy for anybody.

On a more positive note, our Year 10's have yet again asked for an alternative to the school sweatshirt and have requested that I let them wear a 'hoodie'. I have set them the challenge to contact our uniform supplier to enquire about cost. It would be the same colour as a school jumper and also with a logo. They would like this for Year 9 upwards (so classes 3.3 to 4.2 as Post 16 do not wear uniform) so they have something different to the rest of the school. If you are looking to buy uniform at this point and your child is in any of these classes, it may be worth holding fire in case they come up with a good deal and this is what they choose, if you are happy with this obviously. Year 10 will be in contact early next week with what they have found out.

Please keep safe and well

Tracey



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