



23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you and your families all continue to be safe and well.

As this half-term draws to a close, I just wanted to thank you all for your support throughout this very productive half-term. I hope that I don't tempt fate in any way by saying that we have had a very safe and positive start to the academic year. The part you have played in ensuring this is really appreciated. The collective hard work and 'buy-in' from our staff and students has also been fantastic. I have never seen the students as hard-working and determined to make things work as they are at present. Equally, the positivity, flexibility and professionalism of my colleagues, during such uncertain times, has been really uplifting.

I really appreciate your ongoing supply of hand-sanitiser and face coverings. Please ensure that your daughter has renewed supplies, including stationary, ready for starting back on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. Prior to that...I hope that everybody can take a break of some sort and re-charge for the second half of the Autumn term. Hopefully, we will be equally as successful in terms of seeing no cases of coronavirus emerging. In reality, however, I have a sense that it could be more a case of 'when' than 'if' for all schools...as we have had confirmation of positive COVID-19 test results, for a very small number of students, in some of our locality schools. In sharing best practice with the Headteachers of those schools, I feel that it is best to share my thinking on how to react to a confirmed case of coronavirus...should we need to. In view of this, I would appreciate you taking some time to consider the following:

- Some partner schools have reported a significant number of staff and students to have to contact when the time comes (Particularly when students are in Years 10 and 11 due to GCSE groupings being different to teaching sets.) This obviously puts great pressure on small leadership teams to get the message to 'stay at home' out quickly to the appropriate students and staff. Not doing so, or not being able to get through to individual families, puts all students in a year group at risk.
- Having to rely on a very sick student/staff member to give accurate information about close contact is asking a lot, particularly when he/she will feel under pressure to list the people he/she has been in close contact with over the previous 4-5 days (which is the amount of time we may have to contact-trace over.).
- Attempting to continue to deliver high-quality lessons both in school, for some, and at home for others...whilst contact tracing, does not work well according to those who have tried to do both.

In view of the above, if faced with a race to trace multiple contacts and get messages out...it is likely that the full year group, of the student testing positive, would be asked to stay at home for 1-2 days. This would mean that any potential risk of transmission, amongst other school members, was stopped instantly whilst contact-tracing took place. Within that time, all lessons would be live broadcasted, via TeachStream, to students in the home. Please rest assured that any decisions taken are in the very best interests of keeping your child, and all other school community members, safe. The attached letter from our Director of Education at WSCC will reiterate this message. Please take some time to read it.

In terms of TeachStream; I am delighted with the school-based and home trails that we have undertaken in the last few weeks. Our students have been able to access the technology easily and will be able to utilise this resource well if there is ever a full or partial lockdown in the future. Where access to IT resources within the home is a difficulty, I am really pleased to signpost you towards the iPad leasing scheme which has been announced earlier this week. Please do take the time to consider this scheme if you feel that it would be beneficial to your daughter.

All that remains, on behalf of all my staff, is to thank you once again for all your support throughout this half-term. I hope you all you get some well-earned rest time to enjoy as a family.

Yours faithfully,

**Mr Chris Keating**  
**Headteacher,**