

HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

17th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I wanted to write a letter that wasn't confirmation of a new case of corona virus so, touch wood, as we get to the end of Tuesday I thought I would tempt fate.

Firstly, I wanted to say that I hope any of our families who celebrate Diwali last weekend managed to have an enjoyable time despite the current lockdown situation. I am sure the situation made the usual family and community celebrations much harder but, knowing the Bristol Met community, am also sure that it was made into an enjoyable occasion regardless.

As you know, Friday was Children in Need. It wasn't quite the normal event we would do to raise money for the vital charitable work and I know that Mrs Harman, our Librarian, was particularly upset to not be able to do the normal "Big Read" with ceremonial cutting of Pudsey cake (and I know a number of our new Year 7 students were disappointed to not be able to participate in this event). I am however really proud to say we still managed to raise over £800 for charity through Friday's non-uniform/spotty event. Iona in Year 7 took 3rd prize with their Pudsey Hoodie, Nevaeh in Year 10 took 2nd Prize with their spotty yellow skirt and Joseph in Year 8 took 1st prize managing to rock a Pudsey onsie for the day!

I also wanted to thank all of the community for the continued support with the wearing of face coverings in schools. Our students have been amazing with their compliance to these national rules and will be doing their bit to help lower the transmission rates during this current surge in cases across Bristol, the South West and, of course, the wider nation. However, a plea again for your continued support in that we continue to see a chunk of students each day come to school without their face covering. In almost all cases it is merely that they have forgotten it. So far we have continued to be able to give every student who needs one every day a new covering. We have been able to do this by buying our own supplies and, in part, due to the immense generosity of some of our own families who have donated supplies to our stock. Unfortunately, this approach will not be sustainable so in the future if we cannot work together to reduce the number of students who forget theirs we may have to send students home to collect it and return. We would prefer not to take that approach as it wastes valuable learning time for our students and therefore I am asking for us to have a further push in ensuring your child has at least one covering in their blazer, one in their bag and, ideally, one in their coat/outer jacket so that even if they forget one they should still have another available.

You will know from the flurry of letters over the last two school days that we have had several confirmed cases of corona virus in the student body. Currently there is no substantial evidence of these cases being linked necessarily to each other or to transmission within the Academy and, in fact, SAGE reports published Friday still report that much recorded transmission is still within family homes. I wanted to thank our community again for the continued support and understanding as we continue to navigate this ever changing landscape. We have learnt an amount from these last two days and these cases which will help continue to shape our approach and communications in future cases. Given the growth in Bristol as an area it was inevitable we could see cases in our Academy and, in all likelihood, we will have further positive cases over the coming weeks before we hopefully see a reduction as the current lockdown measures take effect. Thank you in advance for continuing to have faith in the measures we implement on site to do our bit in reducing transmission potential and for bearing with us when we have to contact trace students and tell them to self-isolate.

Related to this point it is vital please that if your child or **any other member of your household** shows any symptoms that cause you to decide to book a covid test that your **entire household** then immediately self-isolates **until the test results are received**. A recent case in the Bristol area was of a student continuing to attend school whilst a parent and sibling awaited their test results. The results were positive and the child who had continued attending school subsequently tested positive. Had they started self-isolating when their sibling and parent started showing symptoms no other children would have been



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affected but because they had continued to attend school for two days 40 of their peers now have to self-isolate for 14 days which places strain on families and access to education. I absolutely appreciate that the rules can be difficult to understand in places so if there is any doubt please do ring us for direction even if it means your child arriving slightly late in the morning whilst you wait for advice. Of course advice can also be found on the NHS Website

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>

Finally, as we now have some pockets of students having to self-isolate we are going to start trialing and rolling out some blended learning. That is to say working towards students being able to remote into live classroom lessons from home. At the minute we are geared up for moving immediately to live lesson delivery online should a whole year group be at home or should the whole school be closed again (which we really hope will not happen). The blended approach is the most logistically difficult as it requires the one classroom teacher trying to continue to deliver to the majority of the class who are still sitting in front of them (with the additional requirements of operating a covid safe classroom) whilst also trying to enable students from home to remote in and see/hear the lesson live and interact with these students. This has many challenges but a group of staff will be trialing it over these two weeks and we will then build understanding and confidence in hopefully having wider coverage of these types of lessons moving forward. If your child is currently having to self-isolate at our direction please ask them to not only check Show My Homework each day for the lessons and activities being set (and of course ask them to submit them back for marking/feedback) but also ensure they are checking their emails regularly for direction to MS Teams Classroom Lessons. I wanted to thank you again for your patience and understanding as we try to upskill an entire Academy to operate in a way that, prior to the start of 2020, we would not have expected to be doing.

Until next time I hope that you and your family remain well,

Kind regards

Mr C Shaw
Principal