



HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

5th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I apologise for the second letter in short succession but promised to provide further information as we receive it. Today the Government published updated guidance on the continued operation of Schools during the global pandemic. This was in direct response to Saturday night's announcement about a second national lockdown phase starting today (Thursday 5th November) scheduled to end on 2nd December. The full guidance document is available on this link if you wish to read in full but I will highlight important parts below (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020?utm_source=7427a8d7-6fbd-4315-b29f-2c648cfb91a1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

- **Face masks are compulsory for all students in Year 7 and above along with all staff when outside of classrooms.**
We had already made the decision locally to adopt this approach before Saturday's lockdown announcement and today's guidance release. We will therefore be adopting this approach from Monday 9th November though the Government, and we, would encourage the adoption as soon as possible. Please therefore support us with ensuring your child has a suitable face covering and preferably a resealable plastic bag for storage (sandwich bag is ideal). As per my previous letter I thank you in advance for your support and understanding as I appreciate that face coverings in particular are an emotive subject but hope that you understand that we must follow the guidance/legislation passed to us by the relevant bodies. The full guidance on face coverings is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>
- **Using all of the current data sets available the risks to young people of serious illness with coronavirus is very low**
I absolutely appreciate that some of our young people have underlying health concerns and, even for those who don't, many are nervous about what may happen if they catch coronavirus. It is completely understandable. We have now all spent 9+ months being told daily to be very careful of this virus and for fully understandable reasons. We must keep reminding our young people that they need to follow the rules in order to protect **others** more than themselves (though of course in turn that helps protect them). It is why, currently, schools are staying open in full as the risk evaluation is that more harm is done in closing schools than currently keeping them open. Even students who were previously adjudged to be extremely clinically vulnerable are being told that they are still able to attend school *unless their appointed specialist consultant has contacted you to tell you otherwise this week*. If you have not had contact from a medical professional to tell you that your child should stay at home then they should attend school as normal. If you are at all unsure please contact their specialist doctor for clarification.
- **Far fewer adults will be recommended to be classed as extremely clinically vulnerable this time**
This is because the understanding of the virus and vulnerabilities has continued to evolve. Therefore even if you, as a parent or carer, are extremely clinically vulnerable the recommendation is that there is **no need** for your child(ren) to remain home. They should therefore continue to attend school as normal.
- **Exams are still scheduled to take place, as normal, in Summer 2021.**
Year 11 students have, this week, started their first round of mock exams (as would be usual). They have, over the first 3 days, been amazing! Please congratulate them if you have a student in Year 11 and encourage them to keep it up. We will continue to work to prepare them to fulfil their absolute potential next year.
- **Curriculum can continue largely as normal**
Music, Drama, Dance and PE are specifically listed as able to continue. We have implemented all advice and



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processes given to us by Public Health and continue to modify our approach where requested. Current guidance is that we will be able to reintroduce usual changing for PE shortly so please look out for implementation of that change when we are able. It will further support some return to a more normal way of working for our young people.

I hope you find the above summary of this new guidance useful.

Steve Taylor, CEO of the Cabot Learning Federation has also written to parents this afternoon (albeit before the updated guidance was released). You can find his letter to you here <https://clf.uk/keeping-schools-open/>

I continue to be impressed and humbled daily by the resilience of our staff, students, families and wider community. Already this week nearly 95% of our students are in the building which would be *above* average for the time of year and I thank you, as a community, for your continued support in what is a very difficult time for us all. By continuing to support each other, even when we are nervous, anxious or even frustrated, we can ensure the highest possible quality of education and future for our young people.

With best wishes,

Mr C Shaw
Principal

