



'We value the power of education to change lives.'

21st September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers, Students and Staff

As is to be expected last week we saw student absence increase as the first sniffs and sore throats commonly associated with the return to school began to circulate, no doubt exacerbated by the relative social isolation most students have experienced since March.

I sympathise with parents needing to make the decision whether the sniffs, sore throat, mild headache or cough their child is experiencing should lead to self-isolation and a Covid-19 test or is merely a return-to-school cold. The messages from government are not always as clear as they could be regarding the – actually very specific – circumstances when self-isolation and a test are the most appropriate course of action. I therefore hope that the enclosed Covid-19 fact sheet is of assistance.

Ordinarily we would close at 2pm on two occasions this term to allow staff the time to set up properly for our Main School and Sixth Form Open Evenings here on site. As neither event is taking place on site and both will be offered to the community a few weeks later than planned as virtual Open Evenings run online, we do not need to close. Please therefore note the school will **NOT** close at 2pm on 24th September 2020 or on 15th October 2020.

Early in October I'm pleased to let you know our Science department will be able to resume practical lessons in their Labs; however this means students using a Science Lab as their In-Day room will not be able to eat or drink in them and zoned seating will be provided in the Hall specifically for those Science Lab-based students only (see below for more information). In addition during October our PE department plans to add additional sports to the curriculum and begin making use of indoor spaces such as the fitness suite as well as outdoor facilities; consequently students will be asked to start wearing their PE kit (or part of it) to school on certain days. More information about this will come from the PE department soon.

The government have asked schools to have a plan in place by the beginning of October to provide remote education to students self-isolating. We have a good platform to build on from our distance learning platform during lockdown. However, this must be adapted to take into account how some students in a class/half-year group/year group might have to learn at home for up to 14 days whilst the rest of their peers continue attending lessons in school.

Consequently, from Wednesday 30th September onwards we will start to publish on our website for each subject in Years 7 to 13 substitute lessons using the well-known online platforms such as Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize, plus the online platforms we choose to use already such as Dr Frost and My Maths, plus in-house stand-alone lessons where needed. These will mirror the topics being studied in school each half-term and will go alongside home study set on My Highcliffe. Students going into self-isolation should at first rely on these, although students in Year 11 and 13 would also be wise to use self-isolation to get a lot of revision done. This will be followed, during October, with the launch of our system to enable students at home to access lessons taking place here on site, wherever possible and appropriate, based around MyHighcliffe. More information on this second phase using MyHighcliffe will follow in the next couple of weeks.

In the meantime, students currently self-isolating should continue to contact their Head of Achievement or Pastoral Lead to receive a steady supply of work set by their class teachers.

The weather won't remain reliably warm and dry for much longer. When the school calls an In Day it does not force all students to come inside at break or lunchtime but gives them the option to go to certain rooms. *A key difference for students to fix in their minds is that their In Day rooms changes according to their timetable.* At the moment, on an In Day students who want to be indoors need to go to their Period 2 classroom at break or their Period 4 classroom at lunch *and sit in their Track and Trace seating plan.* If the In Day room classroom is a Science Lab, students cannot eat or drink in them because of the chemical residues potentially present. Students wanting to use a Science Lab as their In Day room should first go to the Hall where year-group zoned tables with Track and Trace lists will be available to them; before going to their In Day Science Lab.

On In Days students are welcome to remain outside if they wish (in their Year Group Zones of course), and in the current situation it is possible more students prefer to stay outdoors in the fresh air than go indoors. Therefore, please can I ask parents to work with the school to persuade students that wearing a coat or jacket when the weather is wet or cold is a responsible decision to make. Students are welcome to bring umbrellas to school too if they wish, although of course they have to be careful with them.

Best wishes to all staff, students, and parents!

Yours sincerely



Patrick Earnshaw
Headteacher