

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you and your family are well and coping with lockdown 2. I am pleased to report that student attendance has been good this week and that we have settled back into our normal routine. I have been so impressed by the positive attitude of our students and their commitment to just getting on with their lessons. Ms Stanghon has carried out surveys with students to get some feedback about how they are finding school at this strange time, and overwhelmingly they have said that they are feeling both safe and happy at school.

Of course we recognise that many of our students and their families have faced significant challenges over recent months, especially facing financial hardship. Can I please remind you that we have extensive provision to support students with their mental health and wellbeing, so if you have any concerns about your child please contact either their Head of Year or Pastoral Leader. If you are facing challenges yourself, please contact us as we may be able to signpost you to where you can seek support.

At the moment, due to the lockdown, we cannot have visitors come into the school or drop things off to be delivered to children at school. I know that this is frustrating, but we have to prioritise health and safety. Staff are working hard to maintain good communications with home and will meet with you by phone or online.

Our progress with digital learning has been significant this year. As I have told you already, Microsoft Teams is our platform. This week we have seen teachers who are unable to come into school, delivering live lessons to their classes. I watched Ms Neburagho teaching Year 11 Science from home and was impressed at how successful the lesson was.

Unfortunately, we have had an increase in staff being called by contact tracers and being told to self-isolate for 14 days, so far I have 7 colleagues unable to come into school. As you know, we are very committed to keeping the school fully open. However, if I lose too many teachers it may get to the point at which I have to reduce the number of children in school. If we do get to this point our plan is as follows:

- Year 11 will stay in school and be the very last cohort to ever be sent home.
- Other year groups may have to go onto a rota in which they have one week in school and one week at home.

If a year group does have to have a week at home lessons will continue and a full timetable delivered. A proportion of the lessons will be streamed live and the rest will be recorded lessons. Students at home will still be expected to follow their full timetable. We have a reserve of laptops to ensure that all can access online learning.

Obviously I hope that this action will not need to be taken, but it is better for us all to be prepared than to spring a decision on you without warning.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips