



13 December 2020

Dear parents and carers

## End of term letter to all parents.

I am hugely grateful for the welcome you have given me in my first term as the headteacher at Lowton Church of England High School.

I want to thank you for the way you have worked with us in the most extraordinary of times as all students have been expected to have been back in school since September. It has without doubt been very challenging at times as we have sought to balance the joint imperatives of health and education.

Public Health Directors have recently revised their guidance to educational settings, which means going forward we will be able to keep more students in school than has sometimes been the case this term. I know how disruptive this has been for you, for students and for the school during this term. Of course, the winter months are likely to be challenging and I will endeavour to keep up the high levels of communication I have had with you during the autumn term.

## Changes to the self-isolation period.

England's Chief Medical Officer announced last Friday that anyone who needs to self-isolate as a result of being a contact of a person who has tested positive with COVID-19 will only be required to self-isolate for 10 days not 14 days as has been the case. This is with immediate effect.

## Over the Christmas break.

I hope we can all enjoy a joyous, healthy and safe Christmas break. Please continue to follow the Government's requirements regarding social distancing and what is allowed (or not) regarding households meeting up. Wigan's Director of Public Health has communicated with schools to say that the main source of virus transmission is in private households.

As a school we are required to report gatherings where we know they occur – and we have done that recently which resulted in some students being sent home to self-isolate. This could have been avoided if the rules had been followed in the first place. The vast majority of you are following the rules – thank you. We all have a duty to play our part in tackling the virus. Not following the rules runs a very high risk of students being sent home to self-isolate.

The school will continue to be responsible for the track and trace process up until the end of 23 December. If anyone in your household develops COVID-19 symptoms, please immediately book at test. If your child tests positive please email [testresult@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:testresult@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk) as soon as you know the result.

I sincerely hope I do not need to contact you regarding any need for self-isolation over the Christmas break, but please be understanding if we need to.

## End of term.

We break up on Friday 18 December. We have a staggered end to the day as follows:

Year	Finish time
7	12.20 pm
8	12.10 pm
9	12.20 pm
10	12.10 pm
11	12.00 pm

**CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING**

The first day back at school is **Tuesday 5 January**. All year groups need to be in school for 8.30 am. Lessons will start as usual at 8.35 am.

#### **Bikes.**

Quite a few students bring a bike to school every day. Some do so very sensibly, wearing a helmet and using the road safely. However, some are not riding safely and it is causing concern in school and in our local community.

For the first week of January we will suspend the use of bikes as a means of getting to school. From Monday 11 January students will only be allowed to bring their bike onto school site if they follow our safe expectations as follows. Students must:

1. Complete a short Bicycle Registration Form before they can bring their bike into school.
2. Wear a helmet to and from school.
3. Wear a school band as proof they are on the Bicycle Register – we will issue this.
4. Ride safely as per the Highway Code - on the road.
5. Lock-up their bike at school.

There has already been a minor accident this term and this approach is to prevent anything more serious and to ensure our local community is not intimidated by anti-social riding of any individual.

Students who submit the application must meet all the conditions to be on the Bike Register. Anyone who breaches the rules will be taken off the register and will not be able to bring their bike onto school site.

#### **End of term newsletter.**

Look out for the end of term newsletter that will be published on Friday 18 December – this will be a round up of great news and events from across the school. This will be published on our Facebook Page on Friday 18 December.

#### **Creative Arts Christmas Extravaganza.**

On Thursday 17 December, you will be able to see our 'virtual' *Creative Arts Extravaganza*. We have not been beaten by the virus and we have some fantastic drama, music and art student showcasing for you. You can view it on our website and Facebook Page from Thursday 17 December.

#### **Charitable giving.**

Thank you for the immense support for our Charitable Giving Day on Friday 11 December. You can see a summary of it and photos on our Facebook page. We were able to give gifts and money to local and international projects: Atherton and Leigh Foodbank, Bridgewater's Café Winter Food Parcel Project, Save The Children and the Ugandan Orphanage we support.

#### **First choice preferences for next year.**

The school is becoming more popular. First choice preferences for next year are up more than 15% and we are likely to be full. This reflects your support and the work of your child in school.

#### **Contribution to Ofsted's national evaluation of the return of schools in September**

On Tuesday 24 November we were selected to be part of Ofsted's national evaluation of the return of all students to school in September. This was not an inspection, there were no grades or judgements and no report, but there is a summary letter which we are still waiting to be published. The 'virtual visit' was completed by two inspectors. They commented on the rich and diverse curriculum we have been able to provide in all subjects and the steps taken to provide remote learning when that was necessary.

As we end the term, thank you for all your support. I hope and pray that you will stay safe, be healthy and know something of the lasting hope and joy of Christmas that comes with celebrating the birth of Jesus – this seems something all the more pertinent as we end an historic year and look forward to our hopes and plans for 2021.

Yours faithfully,

**Kieran Larkin**  
Headteacher