



25 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

A strong start to the year

As the end of September approaches and we are nearly through the first month of the new academic year I wanted to write to you to update you on a range of matters.

Before I do that, firstly let me thank you for all your support in making sure the start of the new term has gone well. Your support in ensuring your child arrives on time each day in full uniform with the right equipment means we can get on with the business of learning from 8.35am each day.

We have set a 'no excuses' approach to this and I am sure I can count on your full support in this so that we jointly remove any barriers to pupils getting on with their learning and catching up on the time lost during 'lockdown'.

I have been impressed with how quickly pupils have adopted the new routines in school and have slipped back into the structure of learning. We are running a normal timetable in all lessons with adaptations to our routines to ensure safe use of equipment and movement in and out of classrooms.

Covid-19

Clearly the national and Wigan situation is a concern but we need to balance these concerns with the need to give pupils the entitlement to their learning in a safe environment.

Wigan is an area seeing a spike in COVID-19 cases currently and is deemed an area that is entering national intervention. Despite this, schools across the country are remaining open and it is our collective desire to see children in school learning in a safe environment.

To date, there have been no Covid positive cases amongst staff or pupils in our school. We know we are not immune to it happening in the future and so we will earnestly continue all the measures we have in place. I would ask that you help us outside of school to ensure your child observes all the healthy routines of social distancing, hand hygiene and face masks that are part of our national and local effort to combat the virus.

We have been advised by Wigan's Director of Public Health that when moving round the premises, outside of classrooms and where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, pupils in Year 7 and above should wear a face mask for the foreseeable future. This means that, other than when pupils are seated in lessons or eating food they should wear a face mask.

The small number of children who have been exempted have been provided with a lanyard or wristband to make this clear to others in a sensitive way.

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

This is not a cause for any alarm. All these measures are in place to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus. We have a range of very effective measures in place that are being observed by everyone in school - handwashing at the start and end of the day and after eating food, hand sanitising at the start and end of each lesson, year groups working as a 'bubble' and designated indoor and outdoor spaces for year group 'bubbles'.

Any decisions we have to take are carefully informed by the latest Government guidance, Public Health England advice and support from the Wigan Health Protection Team. Please see the accompanying letter from 'Test and Trace' on recognising symptoms of a cold, flu or Covid-19.

Healthy face mask use

Please make sure that each day your child has a clean face mask to use in school. From Monday, we are starting a programme in Form Times about appropriate use of face masks, how to put them on and take them off safely and why the use of face masks is an important element of our collective efforts to beat the impact of the coronavirus. We will also post some guidance and videos to demonstrate these.

Remote learning

We are bolstering our whole approach to remote learning. In part, this is to support any absence that is related to the pandemic, but it is also to enhance our approach to learning beyond lessons more generally.

We will increasingly be hosting material on our online platforms that will aid revision, help provide content ahead of teaching new content or units of work and point pupils to resources that will help them in their learning. For those pupils having to self-isolate we are providing work for them that mirrors what they would be being taught face to face in school.

Virtual open evening

On Monday 28 September we are hosting our first virtual open evening. Please help us spread the word about our school and encourage people you know in Years 5 and 6 to consider Lowton for their child.

To join the virtual meeting, you need to go to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter the relevant ID and passcode for the one of the two meetings – both the meetings are the same:

5.00 pm: ID 848 0103 1812 : Passcode 880985

6.30 pm: ID 840 8314 5450 : Passcode 880985

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 will have been given a postcard today with the full details of how to join the meeting. Feel free to pass on the postcard to someone you know who may be interested in joining Lowton in September 2021 or September 2022.

Communication

We make extensive use of our excellent Facebook page and Twitter feed to showcase what is happening in school and to inform you of what is happening. Please visit both of these regularly. It gives a strong flavour of the calm, orderly and learning focused environment around the school. Thank you for your continued support at all times. Ensuring good communication between home and school is essential to our collective success in doing our very best for your child.

Your faithfully



Kieran Larkin
Headteacher



Test and Trace

23 September 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

This is an important letter to share some information on how we can work together to make sure we can continue to give children and young people the best education in the safest way possible.

One important part of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils, parents and our communities is testing for coronavirus. We all have a duty to make sure that the right people have access to get tested at the right time. Every time a test is used inappropriately, a person with Covid-19 symptoms may miss out on getting tested.

Therefore, I ask that you all follow these principles:

- You should only book a test if your child has any of these three coronavirus symptoms:
 1. **a high temperature:** any new high temperature where your child feels hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure the temperature)
 2. **a new continuous cough:** coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
 3. **a loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste:** a noticeable loss of smell or taste or things smell and taste different to normal
- Your child **does not need a test** if they have a runny nose, are sneezing or feeling unwell but do not have a temperature, cough or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste because these are not normally symptoms of coronavirus.
- If you are unsure about whether to get a test, please check the official list of symptoms on the NHS website, which is reviewed regularly:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/
- Only the person with symptoms should get a test. You do not need to get a test for anyone else in the household unless they also have any of the three symptoms listed above. All members of the household need to self-isolate whilst waiting for the test result.

- If the person with symptoms' test comes back positive, other members of their household should continue self-isolating for 14 days and **only get a test if they develop coronavirus symptoms.**
- If a pupil in a class or bubble tests positive for coronavirus, anyone who is advised to self-isolate **does not require a test unless they subsequently develop symptoms.**

No one else in the same class or bubble as the symptomatic person needs to take any action unless advised by the school. Schools have detailed guidance and access to a Department for Education and Public Health England helpline for advice and support.

Contacts of a person who has tested positive must follow the guidance carefully and in full, which means they must stay at home for 14 days. This is because it can take several days following contact with an infected person before an individual develops symptoms or the virus can be detected. Students should only book a test if they get symptoms.

The NHS has produced some guidance to help parents understand when their child can and cannot attend school which you may find useful: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

It is vital for children's learning and future opportunities that they are able to return to school and college. It is therefore vitally important that all we work together and do our bit to make this possible.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Viv Bennett CBE

Chief Nurse and Director Maternity and Early Years | Public Health England

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Follow me on Twitter: @VivJBennett



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