



16th October 2020

Dear parents and carers

The academic year started well with a lot of new routines and we settled into a strong start. We had been relatively fortunate to have not been greatly affected by the impact of the coronavirus. However, as you are aware, we are not immune to it. Last Friday we had to quickly respond to a positive case. Thank you for your understanding over the last few days and for working so closely with us as we have adjusted to teaching Year 8 and Year 11 while they are at home, as well teaching Year 7, 9 and 10 face to face in school. While Year 8 and Year 11 are learning from home we expect all pupils to be accessing their work, completing it and handing it in via SatchelOne.

I am hugely grateful to staff for the extra work they have put in at very short notice to adapt their planning to meet both needs and I am very appreciative of your support and understanding to keep your child learning whether they are in school or accessing it from home.

There are some important date changes on the second page of this letter – please read them carefully.

COVID matters:

Clearly the local, regional and national situation remains of real concern. We work hard to ensure both our staff and students are safe when they come to school each day. We know we collectively play our part in tackling the impact of the coronavirus and to do that we need to be consistent in our actions. I thought it would be useful to reiterate a few key points:

1. If your child displays any COVID symptoms they must self-isolate at home, not mix with any other households or meet up with friends. They must get tested. Ring 119 to book a test.
2. If anyone in your household displays any symptoms they, and your household, must immediately self-isolate. The person with symptoms must get a test.
3. While anyone in your house has symptoms and/or you are waiting for test outcomes, you must not send your child to school, even if they don't have symptoms.
4. Self-isolate means to stay at home (not just, not come to school). You could be fined up to £10,000 if you don't follow self-isolation when required.
5. If a person tests positive they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms (or a positive test outcome if no symptoms) and all household members must self-isolate for 14 days.
6. We must see the outcome of COVID tests as during this public health emergency we need to make sure we are protecting all staff and pupils before allowing those tested back into school. The Pastoral Office will ask to see the email proof of the test outcome (negative or positive).
7. All pupils must bring a face mask to school every day (unless they are medically exempt). **From Monday 19th October if a pupil arrives without a face mask or is not wearing it correctly, they will be given a detention and be asked to buy a face mask from school.**

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

Your questions and our answers:

As I said in my letter last Friday, the decision to send two year groups home was not taken lightly. I have outlined in the appendix to this letter the sort of questions you have either asked or might ask. Please take some time to read these as I hope they explain why we took the action we did, and if we were faced with a similar situation in the future what we would do.

Your contact details:

Please make sure we have the correct contact details for you. If you think we may not have your correct email, contact names, telephone number or new mobile number do let us know. You can let us know via the school office: mcveyh@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk or by telephoning school: 01942-767040.

Year 8 and Year 11 return to school date:

Following on from the tough but necessary decision to send Year 8 and Year 11 home to self-isolate last Friday, we have been advised by the Greater Manchester Track and Trace Hub Team that pupils will need to self-isolate for one day longer than I communicated last week.

Pupils in Year 8 and Year 11 must return to school on Thursday 22nd October.

A change to the end of this half term and the start of the next half term:

We were due to hold a staff training day on Friday 23rd October, but to enable more learning time for pupils before the half term break I have decided to move this to the first day after half term.

This means there will be lessons in school up until the end of Friday 23rd October.

The staff training day is now moved to Monday 2nd November, however, **all Year 11 pupils will need to be in school on Monday 2nd November** as we are conscious that they cannot afford to lose precious learning time.

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will start the new half term on Tuesday 3rd November.

GCSE exams: (summer 2021):

The Government announced this week that GCSE exams in summer 2021 have been pushed back by three weeks. The vast majority of exams will take place between 7th June and 2nd July 2021. One English and one mathematics exam will be held before May half-term to give any Year 11 pupils who may be affected by COVID the best possible chance of still sitting one paper in each of these subjects. GCSE results day has been pushed back to **Friday 27 August 2021.**

Next half term:

Looking ahead we want to keep our eyes firmly fixed on what we are here for - to provide the best possible education for your child. Some of our areas of focus next half term will be:

- All pupils are actively engaged in their learning by consistently high quality lessons.
- Safe and efficient behaviour and learning routines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Ensuring remote learning platforms are used effectively for revision, homework and teaching.
- A new half termly report to ensure you know how your child is doing in each of their subjects.
- Strong communication to celebrate achievement and follow up on any matters of concern.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Kieran Larkin
Headteacher