



11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of our first 'full week' back at school, I would like to extend a huge 'thank you' to everyone in our community for all the efforts to ensure a smooth and positive start to the school year. It has been an absolute joy to have the students back on site, and we have been so impressed with the high levels of responsibility that the vast majority of students are taking to protect themselves and others. This has enabled teachers to really concentrate on getting students back into the routine of learning, and it's been brilliant to see students engaging back in the classroom so positively. I'd also like to congratulate the new Year 7 students on making such a positive start to their Gordano lives, especially in such unsettling times.

Key messages in this letter:

- Reducing the chance of Covid transmission
- What happens if a pupil or member of staff tests positive for Covid
- A reminder of key government guidance
- Other updates, notably on elements of behaviour, uniform and communication with school

Reducing the chance of Covid transmission

As you will be aware, there has been an increase in Covid cases nationally and locally, and there have been a number of confirmed cases in schools not too far away from Portishead. To reassure you, we have not had any positive cases at Gordano, but of course it remains a strong possibility at some point in the not too distant future.

We want to reduce the chances of this happening as much as possible, as well as protect everyone in our community from illness. It is therefore essential that every member of our community must take their share of the responsibility for this, and it is important to remind you of some of our key expectations so that you can reinforce them at home:

- Students should practise good hand hygiene, sanitising hands on the way into and out of every classroom and before and after eating. We would recommend them having their own hand sanitiser.
- Students should follow the classroom cleaning guidance by cleaning their desk and chair in line with the guidance they have been issued.
- Students should wear face coverings (unless they have an exemption agreed by their Head of House) when moving around the school site between their dedicated year-group social spaces and lessons. This is also the case when arriving and leaving the school site. Students have been issued with one navy face covering, but may wear any plain covering of a similar style. Additional coverings will be available to purchase from Student Reception at a cost of £2. We would ask students to bring in the correct money as we will be unable to handle cash to provide change.
- Face coverings should be kept clean by storing them in a clean plastic bag when not being worn, and minimising the amount of touching
- Students must take care when moving around the site, follow the one way system, and only socialise in their dedicated year-group spaces at break and lunchtime

- At all times, students should still do what they can to socially distance and reduce direct contact with other students.
- If they feel unwell, students should immediately report to the Student Centre. If they are showing any of the symptoms below, we will isolate them from other students and ask parents to collect them and any siblings living in the same household. The child showing symptoms should be tested, and families should follow the 'Stay at Home' guidance below.

We know that it takes a little time to get used to these new ways of working, and we'll continue to reinforce the message positively with students, but we will need to apply consequences where students are clearly not taking responsibility for protecting themselves and others.

What happens if a pupil or member of staff tests positive for Covid-19

We are planning very carefully for this eventuality, and wish to be as clear as possible about what would happen should a member of the Gordano community test positive:

- The school would immediately contact our Local Health Protection Team, who would work with the school to establish the measures that we would need to take.
- It is likely that at least some students would be sent home to self-isolate - the period of this would be for 14 days under current guidance. Exactly how many students would be sent home would depend on the circumstances of the individual student(s) who tested positive.
- All students who are sent home to self-isolate would then receive a planned 'remote learning' offer.
- If only part of a year-group were required to isolate, teachers would still need to teach those still in school, so this would not involve live learning at the normal lesson time. Details of the support would be sent out at the time of self-isolation.
- Should there need to be a full year-group (or multi-year) closure, then students would continue to follow their current 'three double lesson per day' timetable, including a combination of 'live teaching' on Microsoft Teams and tasks set on Firefly. All students have been set a task on Firefly reminding them how to use Teams, and Year 7 and 12 will be given further support to familiarise them with the Office 365 package and online learning.

A reminder of key government guidance:

What to do if you have coronavirus symptoms

It is essential to self-isolate at home and book a coronavirus test if a student develops one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- the loss or change of their sense of taste or smell, OR
- is recommended to get tested by a healthcare provider (e.g. GP or nurse)

It is essential that parents do not send their children into school if they have any of these symptoms. If a student develops one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms described below, only they should be tested. There is no need for their households to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic. Tests can be booked online or by phoning 119. Do not visit your GP or come into school if you have coronavirus symptoms.

What to do if you are told to self-isolate

If you are told to self-isolate, you should remain at home for 14 days. You do not need to get a COVID-19 test unless you develop symptoms. It is possible to test negative for COVID-19 whilst the virus is in its incubation stage, which can be up to 14 days. Therefore, if you are told to self-isolate, you must self-isolate for 14 days no matter what.

The full 'Stay at Home guidance for households' can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Other updates and reminders

As I've said, we've been really impressed by the positive approach and excellent behaviour of the vast majority of students, and it's been great to see a very large number of merits awarded over the first week of term. We will work with students to maintain our high expectations, but where necessary we will apply consequences. We would encourage students and parents to download the Classcharts app on their phones (instructions available on Firefly); this will allow students to check whether they are due to attend any detentions that day.

If parents do receive a ClassCharts notification during the day please do not call into school during the school day expecting to speak to the teacher. We would ask that you first discuss the incident with your child when they get home from school, and then make contact if necessary if you have any further questions. Please also note my previous communication regarding the timescale of response - whilst staff will endeavour to respond as soon as possible, it may not be possible on the same day and it may take a few days to respond.

Please ensure that your child(ren) are conforming to the school's normal uniform regulations. The only exceptions to this are the temporary relaxation on the need to wear a school blazer (until all orders have been delivered) and the permission to wear PE kit for the day when students have a PE lesson. Students should not wear a hoody in place of a blazer - they should wear a coat if they do not yet have a blazer.

The new school AstroTurf pitch is on course for completion in early October. This will really enhance the quality of our sports facilities in school. Importantly, in order to protect the quality of the pitch surface for as long as possible, we need to ensure that students wear appropriate (and clean) footwear. Please see the attached document to ensure that this is the case once the students are able to use the pitch.

Finally, a reminder about equipment. Students must have equipment as per the list previously shared, and this is even more important in a time of Covid.

Again, thank you for your brilliant support at this very busy and challenging time. We are staying cautious but positive, and we'd ask parents to be the same with your their children. It is quite natural that the Covid situation will cause some additional anxiety. Please be assured that, working closely together and, as necessary, in partnership with the LSP and with the local Health Protection Team, we will continue to do all we can to ensure we all stay safe, and keep the school open for as many students as possible.

Yours sincerely

Tom Inman
Headteacher