



28th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

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Face coverings in communal areas

In line with DfE guidance face coverings are no longer be required in communal areas in school. We would still advise that students wear masks in more crowded areas such as canteen queues, and there may be a few exceptional circumstances where face coverings are still required unless exempt; where this is the case, we will inform parents direct so that you are aware.

Our Covid absence rate remains relatively steady at about 2% of the school population, which is lower than the average, but we will maintain a clear eye on the numbers over coming weeks and if further mitigations are needed we will do so in liaison with the local Director for Public Health.

We sincerely hope that we will see a continued reduction of the impact of Covid on schools, in relation to student and staff absence. I would like to reiterate my thanks to staff for their willingness to step in to cover for absent colleagues and ensure that continuity for students is maintained.

2nd Covid Vaccinations

We have been informed by the Schools Vaccination Team that the '2nd' round of Covid vaccinations will take place for eligible students between 1st and 3rd March (in the week after half term). Students are still able to get a vaccination through other means, but this should allow many of those vaccinated in school at the start of November to receive their second dose in school.

Further communications will follow on this in the next couple of weeks.

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Potential NEU Strike Action

We continue to work very hard to avoid strike action by members of the NEU starting next Thursday. We are dismayed by the characterisation of the school leadership by the NEU in the press and in particular the suggestion that the school has not done all it can to avoid strike action from being taken. We have accommodated nearly all of the requests that the NEU has made in recent months as well as taking a series of other actions to support the workload of our staff in ways that don't compromise the high standards of education that we strive for. On the one remaining area of disagreement we have offered a long-term solution (to reduce the working time of teaching staff on Progress Evenings) and are very disappointed that the NEU do not seem willing to engage on this with us.

Workload is a real issue for many professions at the moment, especially in light of Covid. School staff have found themselves at the front line throughout the pandemic and are facing the significant impact of the disruption caused to young people's lives. I have been incredibly proud of the dedication of all of our staff throughout the last two years and of the immense contribution that they continue to make to our community.

We have proposed a full consultation on workload for all teaching staff to be launched next week, and have again called on the NEU to stand down their strike so that this important consultation can begin.

I sincerely hope that the education of our students will not be further disrupted as a result of a strike, but we also have to prepare for the possibility that it will proceed. The first day of strike action is due to be next Thursday (3rd February). As the NEU are not obliged to inform us how many of their members intend to strike it would have a very significant effect on the ability to run the school safely. Our provisional plans are:

- Year 11 and 13 would attend school as usual, with cover provided for any teachers that are on strike (for any Year 11 lessons and for Year 13 if possible)
- All other yeargroups would learn from home, accessing 'live lessons' on Teams (where taught by teachers who are working) and being directed to remote learning resources where not.

We will, of course, share further information early next week as the picture develops.

Class Charts Attendance

Thank you for supporting our request to wait until the following day to query any attendance issues. If we could ask for queries to be restricted to the morning and afternoon registration marks (which act as the 'legal' register for attendance records), rather than individual lesson marks, that would be a great help - there can

be many valid reasons why a student may not be present in a lesson, and it is not possible for the Attendance Team to respond to queries on all marks. Please be assured that we have systems in place to ensure we will contact you if we are unable to locate a student in school, and we will get in touch with parents swiftly in these cases.

Students arriving late to school

Due to the roadworks taking place outside of school, we suspended our lates detentions for a period of time. Although these are still ongoing, we will be reintroducing this system from Monday 31st January as families have now had sufficient opportunity to adjust their journey times accordingly.

We do continue to have too many students arriving onsite after the official school start time. This is affecting not only their own education, but that of students in classes that are disrupted by late arrivals. It can also delay the time we can safely account for all students. Where lateness is a persistent problem, we will be writing to families and, in some cases, inviting parents into school for a meeting to discuss further.

January can often feel like a hard month in the midst of a long winter, and this year perhaps especially so, which makes it all the more important to stop and notice all the positives. This morning we hosted a team of teachers from a school in Bristol who were looking at lessons right across the school. Their feedback about what they saw in lessons from our teachers and students was overwhelming. They highlighted the strength of relationships between staff and students and the incredibly high levels of engagement and independence of students. They were so impressed. It can sometimes be easy to take things for granted what you see it every day; hearing it from visiting teachers really brings home the great strength of our learning community. It is that strength that will see us through; Spring will be here before long.

With best wishes.



Tom Inman
Headteacher