October 22, 2021

Dear parents and carers,

It has been a very busy and full half term, but I am pleased to say that despite staffing challenges through illness and Covid we have managed to prioritise face to face education for all classes this half term. We had a period of time in school between late September and the beginning of this week where we had several pupil and staff positive cases, but I am glad to let you know that towards the end of this week there have been none identified. Thank you for your support and for helping your child to understand changes in their staff team, they are coping well with the various disruptions. In the main, all of you are being vigilant about all kinds of symptoms and keeping your child off if they are at all unwell. This really helps keep those at school, whether classmates or staff, as well as we possibly can. Thank you for helping in this way.

Please do notify us at school if your child is going to be off, for whatever reason. It helps us to plan staffing ratios in advance and sometimes allows us to absorb a staff absence without booking agency cover.

If you know you are planning a holiday it is really important that I am made aware of this, before it is booked. There is a leave form for you to fill out, which identifies when you can take your child out of school. Holidays except in exceptional circumstances aren’t authorised, but the form tells you the various occasions when this can be allowed. I am aware of several pupils off this week for holidays that I haven’t been made aware of, and each of these will be unauthorised absences. Please do try and avoid holidays during the school term.

The Government are encouraging the testing regime to remain in place. Please see below. This is for sixth formers and secondary aged pupils.

“Information for schools and colleges on asymptomatic COVID-19 testing

Thank you for continuing to encourage staff, students and pupils to test twice-weekly at home. This is a key part of reducing transmission of COVID-19 in secondary schools and colleges and reducing case rates across settings.

Testing during half-term is very important and we would like all schools to emphasise this in your end of term messages. In particular, testing at home before students return to their setting after half-term will be key to starting back in the best way possible.”

As per this guidance please make a particular effort to test you child on the Sunday before returning or on the morning of Monday 1st November. Staff have been asked to do the same.

Parents of children aged 12 to 15 will receive a letter from the NHS with more information on the vaccination programme shortly, including information about how to book an appointment out-of-school, if this option is preferred. We have also been notified that a date has been set for January 2022 for a school vaccination programme here, and I will keep you notified about this.

I hope that you and your family enjoy some quality time together this half term break. We look forward to everyone returning on Monday 1st November.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Edwards