



Dear Parent/Carer

I am hoping that as I write this year's Christmas newsletter it will still be relevant as things seem to be changing so quickly in the past week! We have really struggled over the past week to be able to staff our classes as parents of children in Year 9 will know as their children have had to complete a day of remote learning just so that we had enough staff to put in front of classes.

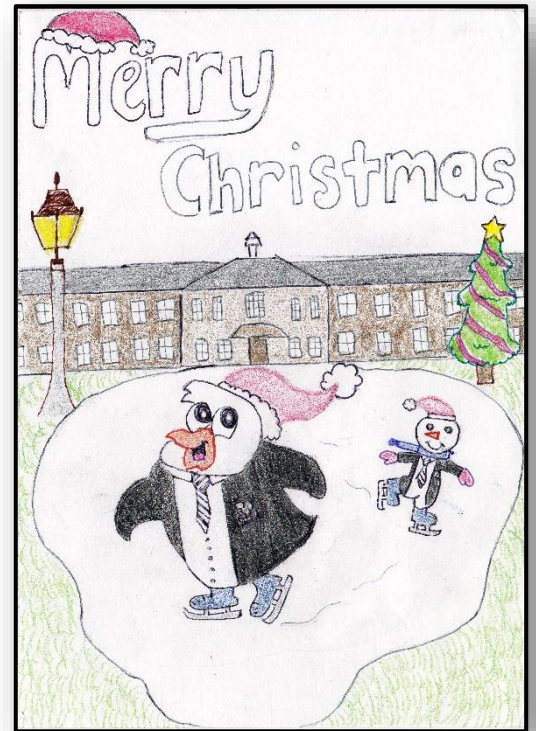
In the past 24 hours the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi has said that he "will do everything in my power to make sure schools are open in January." This was then followed by the Health Secretary Sajid Javid saying in response to the question of whether schools will stay open that "when it comes to our fight against the pandemic, there are no guarantees." I can't help but be reminded of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 when Boris Johnson said he had "no doubt" schools were safe and that parents should "absolutely" send their children in and announcing at 8.00pm the following evening that all schools would close and exams would be cancelled.

Our main aim has been to keep things as normal as possible for the students of Balshaw's and apart from a new system for movement around school which has led to much less congestion and the wearing of face masks, things have been pretty normal. I am delighted to say that, although we have quite a number of students absent with Covid, these cases have not been transmitted in school, but in most instances have come from infection of another family member and then passed on within the family home. This is down to the fantastic compliance that we have had from students and parents with regard to the wearing of face masks in school. This has undoubtedly been the single biggest factor in stopping transmission within school.

Based on advice we have had to cancel a number of events such as our Year 11 Awards Presentation Evening, our Talent Show and Christmas Concert which would all have involved external visitors coming into the building. However, we have still been able to restart sporting events and clubs and activities such as Public Speaking, Chess Club, Science Club, Art Club, Young Writers and more. We have also been able to raise money for Charities such as Children In Need and Save the Children as well as collect contributions for the Leyland Food Bank with contributions at Harvest and for Christmas. We have run the Shoebox Appeal for International Aid and taken Christmas Hampers to Age Concern.


Talking of our Public Speakers, they entered a prestigious competition organised by the English Speaking Union and the students involved (in Years 8 and 9) beat stiff competition from a range of schools including Stoneyhurst College to go through to the next round. The Chair of our team was judged to have been the best Chair of all the schools on the night! It has also been brilliant to see all of our boys undertake dance as part of their PE curriculum this term. I thought that they might be hesitant at the idea, but they have thrown themselves fully into it and the Hall has been filled with dance routines based on Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up* for which they all know the words! It's like having 20 boys bands all performing in the Hall at once!

It has been so good to have school returning to something like it was pre-pandemic and we pray that we can continue this way as we move through the remaining months of the Winter.



## Post-Christmas Covid Testing

All students will be tested for Covid before we return to school in the New Year. There is a schedule for testing which is below. Please ensure that your child arrives in their allocated slot:



TUESDAY 4 <sup>th</sup> JANUARY		
Year	Time Slot	Tutor Group
Year 11	8.45 – 10.00am	CL9 CL10 CU9 CU10
	10.00 – 11.00am	FN9 FN10 WN9 WN10
Year 10	11.15 – 12.15pm	CL7 CL8 CU7 CU8
	12.15 – 1.15pm	FN7 FN8 WN7 WN8
Year 9	1.45 – 2.45pm	CL5 CL6 CU5 CU6

WEDNESDAY 5 <sup>th</sup> JANUARY		
Year	Time Slot	Tutor Group
Year 9	8.45 – 10.00am	FN5 FN6 WN5 WN6
Year 8	10.00 – 11.00am	CL3 CL4 CU3 CU4
	11.15 – 12.15pm	FN3 FN4 WN3 WN4
Year 7	12.15 – 1.15pm	CL1 CL2 CU1 CU2
	1.45 – 2.45pm	FN1 FN2 WN1 WN2

## Lateral Flow Device Testing Kits & Twice Weekly Testing

We are expecting another delivery of LFD kits before Christmas which we will distribute to your child via tutor groups. These are for our students to be able to test themselves twice per week. We recommend getting into the habit of doing a test on a Sunday evening and a Wednesday evening.

Apparently supplies of LFD kits that can be ordered online have temporarily run out and other than the kits that you can get through school, only pharmacies have stocks left, so make sure your child passes your supply of test kits to you once they have received them.

## All Year 7,8 & 9 to Bring Headphones to School in the New Year

Our students in years 7 – 9 are excited about the arrival of their laptops which will transform the way that students can learn and submit work at KS3. In order to be able to use some of the sound files in Modern Foreign Languages or to watch GCSE Pods and other audio/video resources, they will need a pair of headphones which can be purchased for as little as £2.00.



## Change to Girls' PE Uniform

This is just a reminder of the message you received earlier this term about a change to the girls' PE uniform that will be in place from September 2022. We will be phasing out the Skort which will no longer be on our uniform from September 2022. Instead, girls will wear Balshaw's branded sports leggings or the unisex black shorts.

## Names in PE Kit

Please do ensure that your child has a name in their PE kit. Some of our parents must be spending so much money on PE kits that get lost and not returned as we seem to collect un-named PE kits!

## Flu Vaccination Programme

Intrahealth were in school delivering the School Aged Flu Vaccination Programme earlier this term. They will be running Community clinics in January in every area and will be contacting parents whose child may not have had the flu vaccination in school.

## Getting a First or Second Covid Jab for your child

**BREAKING NEWS:** Young people aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum of 12 weeks from the first dose, following advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

NHS England have now confirmed that, as with first doses, healthy school-aged **children aged 12 to 15 will be able to receive their COVID-19 vaccination in their school next term**, as well as having the option to receive the vaccine out of school, such as through vaccination centres. These offers will run in parallel.

Vaccination for this group will continue to be deployed primarily by the school age immunisation service (SAIS). In school vaccination will begin from Monday 10 January. Parents of children aged 12-15 that have not yet had their first vaccine can book their child's first vaccination slot over the winter break via the [national booking system](#).

## Home Learning and Online Learning Resources

Home Learning is a crucial to the academic success and progress of students. With such content rich specifications, students need to take time each evening to consolidate and revise their learning from each day. At KS4 students should be undertaking 2.5 hours of homework per evening.

As well as the work that they have in their exercise books, we subscribe to a range of online resources for students to be able to consolidate their understanding and improve their progress. A summary of some of the main resources available to students is below:

Resource	Subject	Password needed?	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10/11
<b>GCSEPod</b>	All subjects	Yes			(✓)	✓
<b>Century Tech</b>	Maths, English, Science	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Memrise</b>	MFL		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>MyMaths</b>	Maths	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Educake</b>	Science, Geography	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Bedrock</b>	Literacy & Vocabulary Development	Yes	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Seneca</b>	All subjects	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>iDEA</b>	Computing	Yes	✓	✓	✓	
<b>BBC Bitesize</b>	All subjects		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Focusealarning</b>	Science		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Seneca</b>	All subjects		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Quizlet</b>	All subjects		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Pearsonactivelearn</b>	MFL	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Musical Futures</b>	Music	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Musical Contexts</b>	Music	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Bandlab</b>	Music	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>National Theatre Library online</b>	Drama	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓

## How to get your work from Synergy

We still get some queries from parents (and students) unsure of where work is on Synergy or how to check positives and negatives, punctuality and attendance.

Mr Daniels has put together a video that shows your son/daughter exactly how to use Synergy. If you click on this link here you will be able to watch this video. One of the most powerful ways that you can support your child's learning is to get them to teach you what they have learned in a lesson or to talk you through one of the Nuggets in CenturyTech or a Podcast on GCSEPod. This is one of the single most effective ways that they can embed and deepen their knowledge.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p842z5a>



## A massive thank you

Dr Breen, our School Librarian and Archivist sent out a wish list of books to parents that students would love to have in our Library for our students to be able to take out.

We were overwhelmed by the incredible response from parents who have bought books from this list as a donation to the Library. It was so kind, generous and thoughtful of the parents who have made these book donations.

# THANK YOU!!!

## An Update to School Sanctions

We are very concerned about the sharp rise in the number of students who have been found with vaping equipment in school. Firstly, you have to be 18 or over to buy vapes and vaping liquid. Secondly, there is no way to tell what is in the liquid that is being used in vapes (County Lines gangs are targeting young people with a range of chemical liquids that can be used in vapes).

As a consequence of this and in line with a number of other schools, we will **immediately suspend** any student found to have vapes or vaping equipment with them in school.

## Church Events

I do hope that there will be a place in your Christmas for Christ this year. More than ever the reassurance that “If God is with us, who can ever be against us?” is needed as we still face uncertainty and disruption. There is no doubt that this has taken its toll on people, their resilience and ability to cope with challenges that they face. This can manifest itself in many different ways from physical exhaustion, short-temperedness, anxiety, aggression and intolerance to a range of other less apparent mental health issues.

Attached to this newsletter is a copy of Blackburn Diocese’s Advent Booklet. I hope that you may find this helpful. I was particularly struck by the idea of the ABC model in the page written by Alexandra Uffindell, Lay member of Buckshaw Village Church which you can find on page 8.

Also below you can see the times of a number of different events taking place at St Andrew’s this Christmas Season.

Finally, I hope that you all stay well over the Christmas season, get to spend time with the people you love and care about and that we may all share the joy that Christ’s birth brings to the world.

Christmas blessings,



Mr Steven Haycocks  
HEADTEACHER

Your Word is a lamp for my feet  
and a light on my path.  
(Psalm 119, vs 105)

non sibi sed aliis

