

Dear Parent/Carer

**A very different term:**

We are approaching the end of the first term of the school year - one of the most unusual terms of school that any of us have experienced for some time. We are very much missing all of the things that mark out the passing of the Autumn term: Talent Show, Winter Wonderland, Remembrance Service, Memorial Garden Service, School Production, Christmas Concert and so on. Our Covid-safe measures have meant that we have had very few positive cases in school though. So far, since the start of October, we have had 28 members of the school community who have been positive for Covid-19, although a number of these have not had a direct impact upon the wider school community. Nevertheless, 58% of the school have had at least one day of isolation. We have welcomed the news about the changes to the exams this summer for Year 11, but it does not go far enough to address the imbalance for students who have had to miss significantly more days than others, so we hope that the 'expert group' put together to explore this for the government are able to address this issue.

**Covid over Christmas**

As Christmas approaches, I just want to remind everyone of the importance of keeping up the high Covid safety standards we have maintained so far. No-one wants to have to miss Christmas because they have to be in isolation or run the risk of transferring the virus to any relatives who may be vulnerable.

- Any contact that your child has with a person who turns out to be a positive Covid case *after Friday 11th December* would mean that they would have to be in isolation over Christmas day.
- If your child does get a positive test result at any time after we finish school up **to the 24th December** that you contact the school by emailing: [enquiries@balshaws.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@balshaws.org.uk)
- We will then conduct a track and trace of students who are close contacts to inform them of the requirement for them to isolate and for how long.

**Arrangements for the last week of term:**

Although we can't have the usual Christmas events, we do have two Christmas events planned:

- On Monday 14th December we will be releasing our online Christmas celebration: Follow the Star of Hope ([click here to see the trailer](#)). This will be an online selection of nine readings and musical performances will be from our students with some drama pieces from Key Stage 3 students. We hope that we will be able to raise some money for the [local charity SLEAP](#) which provides support for homeless young people in South Ribble. You will be able to make a voluntary donation through ParentMail.
- Sadly we cannot go to St Andrew's for our Christmas Service this year. However, on Thursday 17th December we will be holding a special Christmas Service for all of our students via Teams with a bit of a surprise...

There will be a full lunch service for students on the last day of term before the afternoon session and registration in tutor groups. The departure times for each year group are below:

Friday 18th December:

Yr7	Reg (8.40/9.10)	P1 (9.10/10.10)	P2 10.10/11.10)	P3 (11.10/12:10)	Lunch 12.10/12.50)	Reg (12.50/13.00)
Yr8	Reg (8.45/9.10)	P1 (9.10/10.10)	P2 10.10/11.10)	P3 (11.10/11:50)	Lunch (11.50/12.30)	Reg 12.30/12.45
Yr9	Reg (9.00/9.10)	P1 (9.10/10.10)	P2 10.10/11.10)	P3 (11.10/12.10)	Lunch 12.10/12.50)	Reg (12.50/13.00)
Yr10	Reg (9.00/9.10)	P1 (9.10/10.10)	P2 10.10/11.10)	P3 (11.10/12.00)	Lunch (12.00/12.40)	Reg (12.40/12.50)
Yr11	Reg (8.50/9.10)	P1 (9.10/10.10)	P2 10.10/11.10)	P3 (11.10/12.10)	Lunch 12.10/12.45)	Reg (12.45/12.55)

**2020 draws to a close**

For many the challenges that 2020 has brought with it have been the cause of emotional pain and deep distress. For anyone who has lost a loved one, or been separated from those that they love, the separation and inability to join together with the people who matter to them as a result of Covid restrictions has magnified these emotions many times over. Christmas can be a time when loss and sadness can be felt more sharply.

As we reflect back on the year, I think that there will be many things we have learned about ourselves and the things which we value and hold dearest. Many positives have come from this time - some new ways of doing things are ways that we might keep going forward. What we have learned is that as human beings, we need other human beings - not in front of a screen, but face-to-face and less than two metres away! We all hope that this time is coming again soon and there is much to hope for in 2021, but there is still some way on our journey yet and as I write this we don't yet know what Brexit will look like. There may or may not be a deal, but it will definitely happen on 1st January and as yet we don't know what the consequences will be. Hopefully the vaccine will be rolled out successfully across the country so that we can start to be the social creatures we so clearly are.

Whatever happens, we know that God is still watching over us and that here at Balshaw's we will keep doing our best to create positive, polite, kind and successful young people ready to go out into society and make a change for the better.

I wish you a peaceful Christmas and blessings for a happy and healthy New Year for us all.

Mr Steven Haycocks

HEADTEACHER  
BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

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