

Tuesday 12th January 2021

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

Just a quick bit of feedback as we go through our first week following the lockdown announcement. Huge thanks for the large number of pupils who have turned up and are attending the daily “zoom registration”. Almost all classes had over 90% attendance and many pupils were dressed in school uniform, bless them! We hope you are finding the online lessons of use and appreciate any feedback to teachers or Heads of Year, be it positive or negative, but please be constructive. Only by working in partnership and implementing change at pace can we achieve the very best for the children in our care. That being said, we have had an ever-growing number of heartfelt letters from parents thanking the staff for going the extra mile. We know that you are also working evenings and weekends to support your children - together we will continue to do our best.

Thank you for responding to the latest government advice. **We are trying to keep the number of children in school to a minimum to help reduce the spread of the virus and keep as many people as safe as possible.** We have an increasing challenge regarding the staffing of in-school groups, alongside delivering online education. Currently, there are over 175 pupils attending across both school sites daily. This is a huge increase from March 2020 and presents a serious implication to the blended learning model we are currently delivering.

In light of this, and to be fair to all critical worker parents, we ask you to reconsider whether you can safely keep your child at home. **We ask all critical workers to take the time to review your own situation, even if your child is currently in school, and consider whether you can reduce your child’s attendance (e.g. by reducing the number of days your child is in school).** The Pupil Attendance Booking Form for w/c 18th January will be sent tomorrow for return on Thursday. We will be double vetting those already in school to ascertain whether there is any flexibility on days children attend. We would like to thank those parents and carers who have already contacted us to either ask for their child to only attend on the days they are working or have found other ways to keep their children at home full-time, despite being classed as a critical worker.

We hope that everyone is now successfully accessing their Google accounts, so we would like to advise parents and children to take a moment this week to change their passwords for Google. We will send instructions with a step by step guide to changing the generic password we provided you with, to a more secure personalised password. This will help ensure that your child’s accounts are secure from unauthorised access. Please make sure you choose a strong password that can be easily remembered as this will minimise disruption to your child’s access to remote learning. Your new passwords cannot be accessed by the CHPS team, so they would need to be reset manually. This can only be done by the IT Leads who are both full time teachers, so please be mindful that this may not happen immediately. The IT Lead will be sending these reset instructions via School Story on Dojo and they will also be available on our website.

It is a challenge but also a privilege to try to keep everyone progressing at some level.

Thanks again
John DF Martin and the Castle Hill Team



John DF Martin
Executive Headteacher