

18th December 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to express our continued thanks for your patience, understanding and support during the most difficult of terms. As I keep saying, the way in which we have been able to ensure our school works so safely and normally, can sometimes disguise the challenges we are all facing. The pace of change facing schools is clearly evidenced by the fact that following government announcements, I have had to rewrite this letter twice since sitting down to write to you.

I intend to send a little more information next week about the return in January and ask that you share the information with your child. The key message is that when we return, we must make sure we keep doing things right; follow the rules around the site and generally respect each other's space. Just to give a little context and confidence, our onsite first aid attended 137 students displaying Covid19 symptoms between September and half term. The same team attended only 21 calls in the second half of the term. We are also in our third week without a positive case in school. This is due to a mixture of good fortune, great planning, supportive families and considerate students. Thank you!

Mass Testing in Schools

We are awaiting more information about mass testing in secondary schools and I am sure further details will come out over the holidays. As it stands, there is a lot of responsibility on schools to set up a Covid testing provision which should reduce the numbers required to isolate. While we will continue to do everything we can to keep staff and students safe, I'm afraid it isn't possible to give much more information on this at the moment as this really has been dropped on schools without notice. Rest assured, as with everything this pandemic has thrown at us, if any school can make something work safely and with consideration, LSA can. We will continue to read government directions as soon as they become available, respond to them thoughtfully and efficiently and communicate everything to you as soon as we can.

Testing Positive Over Christmas

Please also remember that if your child tests positive for Covid19 during the first week of the holidays, we need you to complete the following form so that we can trace all the close contacts https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hmpYWbEmU2DF5CfHJ74qo_TmijnLK5ljQ5kAPxZDCtUQ0IVRjJNVzg4VORVRUxZQUcxUE5ZSDQ5Qi4u

We will then try and trace their contacts and let others know the need to isolate for 10 days.

Returning to School in January

We have been directed to change our plans for the start of next term. The return of students will be staggered, with year 11 returning to full time lessons on site immediately and years 7,8,9 and 10 starting the year with remote education from home. The school will also be open for children of key workers as normal, while we will also provide access to remote lessons for all other pupils.

Monday 4th January:	School closed (pre-arranged staff training, INSET)
Tuesday 5th January:	School open to year 11 and the children of key workers
Wednesday 6th January:	Year 11 and the children of key workers in school, Years 7, 8, 9, 10 will start their remote learning

We will then write to parents and communicate further information about the week beginning 11th January, but we are hopeful that this will be a normal return to school for everyone.

Attendance Checks

Please be aware that in order to ensure ALL our pupils are safeguarded effectively, during the week commencing Tuesday 5th January the attendance team will continue to send out texts to parents/guardians for any child who is not in school. While we are aware this may be unnecessary for the vast majority of families (where you will know that they are learning remotely at home and will not need to respond to the text), this is to ensure that ALL parents/guardians know whether their child is in school or not to avoid any safeguarding concerns for the children of key workers or others expected in school.

Remote Learning for One Week

There will be a massive online learning effort from **WEDNESDAY 6th January**. All students at home will be expected to log on and complete their work, as per their timetable through Microsoft Teams. There may be some supplementary work using Satchel:One and/or email.

We have a section on the school website that can really help families be ready for this. <https://lythamhigh.lancs.sch.uk/our-remote-learning-strategy>

Whilst this is a couple of weeks away yet, it is really important to remember the key principles around online/remote learning:

- We expect students to log on and be available for the lesson shown on their timetable, but we also understand fully the challenges for families.
- Activities will be planned for the first week that **consolidate prior learning** and **deepen understanding** rather than new content.
- New learning will be planned to begin from 11th January.
- Teachers will deliver a mix of online activities, live video/audio and other appropriate activities as close as possible to "normal" learning (dependant on technology and resources available).
- Please try not to worry about the impact of a few remote lessons, across the larger scale of many hours of learning in school over five years. Staff are very adept at picking up where pupils have not fully understood content and subsequent lessons will be planned to ensure learning is embedded.
- Again, we fully understand that not all families can support remote learning (quiet space, shared devices etc). This is even more the case with a closure of different year groups with many families (mine included) having to share devices between parents, work and siblings.

As we finish for Christmas, I am expecting that I will need to write/email once more before the end of next week and will also send a reminder text/email on Monday 4th January to make sure we are all ready to hit the ground running when we return.

I am genuinely sorry for the amount of information over the last nine months and am so grateful for the support and understanding. I hope we are all able to enjoy a safe and relaxing Christmas and that we can enjoy a far better 2021!

Merry Christmas.



Ray Baker
Headteacher