

20 December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of what has felt like the longest and most challenging term that I have ever experienced in a school. The ongoing challenges around the COVID-19 pandemic have not gone away and I want to thank parents for their unwavering support over this last term.

I also want to apologise that we haven't been able to provide the level of consistency in terms of the teaching team that we would normally strive to achieve. I am aware that children and parents have been frustrated at times by the sheer amount of 'cover' or 'supply' lessons. This is caused by the number of staff, including myself, who have been forced to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19. I am pleased to report that nearly all staff have returned and are feeling much better. We have also found ourselves struggling to get supply teachers to work in school (this is a national issue) and staff have gone above and beyond to teach and supervise classes this term.

With the support of the amazing team of staff at Unity we have managed to remain open all term for children. There have been times where, if staff had not volunteered to support with duties, covering lessons or other tasks, I would have been writing to you to inform you that some children were moving to remote learning as we simply could not staff lessons. I am indebted to the staff for their support and to parents and children for their understanding throughout this time.

COVID-19 clearly isn't going anywhere and I write with arrangements for the new year accurate up to the 17th December 2021 at 3PM.

- Reception to Year 6 return to school on Wednesday 5th January 2022 at normal time. We would suggest that parents complete a lateral flow test on children on the morning of the 5th.
- Children in Y7, 8 and 11 return on **Wednesday 5th January 2022** at normal time. They will complete a lateral flow test in school on that day.
- Year 9 and 10 children return on **Thursday 6th January 2022** at normal time and will complete a lateral flow test on that day.

Children in Y7 to 11 will be required to wear a face covering in communal areas unless exempt.

The academy closes to all students at 1PM on Tuesday 21st December 2021. The final day (Tuesday) is a non-uniform day for all students. There is no fee for this event. Despite public health advice forcing us to cancel face to face events, videos of nativities will come home soon and the Unity Christmas album is available on the academy website.

Parents/Carers whose children are eligible for Free School Meals should have received (or will shortly receive) a link for a £30 voucher per student for the holiday period. This has been funded once again by Blackpool Council.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the whole staff team at Unity to wish all parents, carers and students a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Cooke". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'S' and a stylized 'C'.

Mr S Cooke  
Headteacher