



Lealands
High School
A Specialist Sports College
Aspire Believe Achieve

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10th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a while since I have updated you as I am conscious to try not to bombard you with communications. However, as we come towards the end of term, I thought you might appreciate an update of where we are in relation to running the school during this pandemic.

As with many schools, we had been concerned that staff absence due to symptoms or contacts with those who have symptoms or test positive might have made running the school very challenging this term. We have also had some staff having to remain at home to look after their own young children when they have been sent home by other schools to isolate.

We have seen a reasonably steady number of staff absent in relation to Covid19. On most days this has been between 3 and 6 staff members (out of 143 staff). Since the start of this term, there have been 40 instances of staff absence that have been Covid19 related. Only 3 members of staff have tested positive and all of these were already self-isolating due to other household members at the time they were tested.

When staff have been isolating but not ill, they have provided 'live lessons' from home or recorded lessons that are then delivered to their supervised classes in school. This has proved to be successful and students have responded well.

Since the start of term, 7 students have tested positive for Covid19 which is a low number compared to schools locally and regionally. Unfortunately, we have had to send most year group bubbles home to self isolate for one period of time, this term, as a result of positive cases in their year group bubble. The feedback we have received on the surveys to parents about remote learning during this period has been overwhelmingly positive and also enabled us to refine one or two areas from what parents have told us.

During periods of bubble self-isolation, we have worked hard to ensure that all our students have access to a laptop/computer to complete their work and monitored this carefully. The vast majority of students have worked extremely well at home to ensure that they do not get behind. We are grateful to parents for supporting this and using the Epraise App to keep up to date with how your child is doing.

When bubbles are sent home to self-isolate we have offered food parcels for our families who are in receipt of free school meals and these have been gratefully received. Over the Christmas period Luton Borough Council have committed to provide support for our children in receipt of free school meals and some others who are extremely disadvantaged. We believe this will be in the form of vouchers and will send further details when these are available.

Our students who receive free school meals have continued to be given lunch throughout the term and we have been working with our caterers to extend this to all other families. I am pleased to report that we are now offering 'picnic lunch bags' that can be pre-ordered by any parent. In the New Year, we hope to be able to further improve the food offer and possibly introduce some form of hot food on some days. However, this has proved to be very challenging logistically whilst maintaining the integrity of our bubbles and precautions.

I am immensely grateful to our students and staff who have been following our precautions very well and been extremely flexible and patient. Student behaviour has been exemplary during this period and this has supported the effective running of the school in difficult circumstances.

We have been working with some groups to catch up on work missed in the Spring and Summer terms; especially students in Year 11 and some in Year 7. We are monitoring the work of others carefully and further 'catch up' opportunities will be rolled out in the New Year for those who need this.

I am very pleased that all students are in school currently and we really hope that this can be maintained until the end of this term. However, as you know, some of this is out of our control. We do ask all our families to make sure they are following the rules out of school and to keep their child at home if they develop any symptoms or signs of illness. Please inform us if your child has Covid19 symptoms straight away.

Our Year 11 students completed their mocks this term and a large number of Year 10 students completed their first external public exam. All students were fantastic in these examinations and have worked so hard as well as behaved impeccably.

The Government recently announced some changes and concessions to Year 11 examinations in the Summer, including reduced content for some subjects and a delayed start to the exam period. There may also be some advanced notice of topics to be covered in some exams and a commitment to more generous marking to ensure fairness. However, the Government are still working out the detail of these proposals and it is a very difficult time for staff and students to know exactly what this will mean. We will do everything we can to ensure our Year 11 students are as prepared as possible for their GCSEs.

We are all looking forward to a well deserved break over Christmas. Although, like so much of this year, it will not be a normal Christmas, I hope that you will find it to be peaceful and enjoyable. On the 8th December the Department for Education announced that schools should try to make the 18th December a training day. In order to do this, students may now be expected to work at home or in school on the 19th July (previously a designated training day). **This means that school will finish for the Christmas Holidays on Thursday 17th December at the usual times.**

Thank you so much for all your support, patience and encouragement during the past year. It has been challenging for us all, but by working together and supporting each other as positively as possible, it has been as good as we could have hoped in the circumstances. We are hopeful for more positive circumstances in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Burridge
Headteacher



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