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2 November 2020

TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

As we fast approach the start of a second National Lockdown, I wanted to write to you with an update. As I have said throughout the global pandemic to date, it is vital that you are aware of our rationale as a school and our intention to do the very best for our staff, their families, our pupils and you as their families at all times.

The announcement of the second lockdown on Saturday came as little surprise for many of us but with huge disappointment and, for some, complex anxieties as a result. There remain many unanswered questions and the announcement certainly serves to put back into sharp focus the need for us all to play our role and remain vigilant about COVID-19 at all times.

The major difference in this lockdown is of course that, as a school, we are required at this stage to remain open for all our pupils. I offer my full support for this measure but do so with continued transparency and clarity. It is impossible to socially distance in our school at all times despite our collective very best efforts and intentions. Our corridors, despite our fully functioning, risk reducing lazy river, are busy. Our class sizes are naturally smaller than most comprehensive secondary schools but pupils remain in school, in classes of 24-30 for all lessons, each and every day.

We have met this afternoon as a Senior Leadership Team and discussed at length the next steps for us all in our community. We have talked through what we believe we can do to make a difference *prior* to receiving any further guidance from Government as we risk assess our context at this crucial stage. This is subject to change and updating if/when central guidance is issued.

I can confirm that:

1. **Face coverings - pupils. We have taken the decision to mandate masks in all classrooms for all pupils as well as in corridors with immediate effect.** There has been much scientific discussion around the airborne spread of this virus and we feel this is a control measure we can proactively implement. We believe it is a decision that we need to make courageously and therefore increase our role in contributing towards the reduction of risk for our entire community whilst we are all required to remain in school. Pupils will not be required to wear a mask during practical PE lessons.

If your child does not have a face covering when they arrive in school and is able to wear one, they will be required to purchase one from the Dining Hall via the online payment system. Staff will continue to remain sensitive to those pupils who are deemed exempt in line with Government guidance. These pupils will need to be carrying notification of their exemption.

2. **Face coverings – staff.** Staff will teach in a clear visor and/or face mask depending on the activity for all lessons including practical lessons. Staff who teach hearing impaired pupils will wear a visor during instructional activities. Staff in administrative areas will be required to wear a mask at all times.

3. **Hands, Face Space.** We have reminded our pupils today about Hands, Face, Space; back to basics with what we know can help prevent the spread of the virus. We ask that you continue to do the same at home.

4. **Covid kit.** We will continue to require pupils to sanitise their own hands on the way into classrooms. Please make sure they have an adequate supply of hand sanitiser along with, as previously mentioned, a mask and a spare, tissues, their named water bottle, their reading book and a small sandwich type bag in which to store their mask while they are eating.

5. **Teaching and learning.** Classes continue to be taught in rows, facing the front in line with guidance. This is in all classrooms apart from one Art room where the large desks are over 2m apart and the shape of the room prevents them being set up in rows.

6. **Cleaning regimes.** We continue to have two dedicated on site cleaners focussing on cleaning areas of high touch point/ contact areas throughout the school day. In addition, each class teacher uses EN14476 virucidal disinfectant to clean desks between lessons.

7. **Assessments.** Mock exams for Year 11 will continue as planned but now with masks. These exams are in ventilated rooms under exam conditions with large numbers of pupils. It is vital that our pupils get this experience prior to any 'terminal' exam series which the Government is still saying will definitely go ahead in the Summer of 2021. Assessment tracker data continues to be collated for all other year groups in line with our assessment calendar. All parents' evenings will continue to be virtual.
8. **Ventilation.** Windows remain open in all classrooms. Pupils are in rooms for just under an hour and we are emphasising the need for a 5-minute window of time to clear the 'airspace' between groups where possible.
9. **Uniform.** We have already enabled all pupils to wear their PE fleece at all times in school. Rooms are cold in order to be well ventilated. We hope that pupils will also wear a plain white t-shirt or under layer as appropriate as the weather gets colder. We appreciate that the PE fleece is not a cheap item to purchase and will require regular washing so would therefore like to increase the flexibility further within our uniform policy to introduce a unisex, **navy, plain, round neck** sweatshirt that can be worn by pupils with their uniform. These can be sourced online or in supermarkets and are relatively inexpensive. No logos, stripes, 'hoodies' or other jumpers are allowed to be worn. This amendment will be in place until Christmas 2020 and be reviewed thereafter. Pupils will need also need a coat. This can be worn not only to and from school, at break and lunch times outside but also in the building between lessons. Coats will be removed in classrooms during learning time. Please make sure your child has a coat as we will be outside even in light drizzle as previously stated.
10. **After school activities – all year groups, all subjects.** These will all be cancelled with immediate effect. We were proud to re-start ours so quickly way back in September but these are non-essential activities and in light of the imminent Lockdown 2, have been cancelled until further notice to prevent wider mixing and reduce the risk of viral spread.
11. **Year 11 revision and catch up sessions after school.** These will take place online either via a pre-recorded session or live via a Zoom/Teams link. Teachers of Year 11 will inform their pupils of the details around their subject specific sessions.
12. **Rotas and potential short notice temporary year groups required to learn at home.** We have discussed the possibility of significant staff absence (for example self-isolating) requiring us to keep a year group learning at home for a short period of time. We would hope to be able to inform parents/carers of this (*if it were to happen*) either the night before or prior to 0800 the morning of the temporary closure to a specific year group. We would consider this strategy with Year 9 and/or Year 10 in the first instance. We feel it important to give you prior knowledge of this as a potential strategy moving forwards. We have previously been required to plan for 2-week rotas of blended learning with some year groups learning at home and some in school to reduce pupil numbers in our buildings. We will let you know more information if the forthcoming guidance continues to state that this is a requirement.
13. **Whole school risk assessment.** This will be updated again in the next 24 hours in light of all the information shared with you above and remains available in full on our COVID page within our school website.

I ask that you do not send your child to school with any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Please do re-familiarise yourself with them. We have recently had our second positive pupil case which is a stark reminder that nowhere is exempt. We all have our role to play in minimising the impact of the global pandemic wherever possible.

As stated earlier, I believe at this juncture it is absolutely right to keep schools open. Staff at Cams Hill School want to teach your children as safely and as cautiously as they can, in line with all guidance in school. Heading to a second lockdown in the winter months is going to be a challenging experience for all of us. Keeping our pupils as safe as we can, whilst also being focussed, positive, happy and challenged remains our core business. I am extremely proud of the way in which our entire staff community has come together to support our young people; I am proud of pupils themselves for their resilience, positivity and optimism. I continue to be so very grateful to you all as parents and carers for working in such positive partnership together with us and thank you in anticipation of your continued support.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Harrison-Jones

Headteacher