

05.01.2021

Dear Parents,

It is regretful that as a nation we are in a worse predicament (apart from the vaccine roll out) than we were in March and the late notice of the Prime Minister's message has not helped with planning.

I want to begin by thanking you for the overwhelming support you have given both myself and teachers when we have phoned around today. It is very much appreciated and makes a difficult time a lot easier to cope with.

As you know we are entering a National Lockdown where we are being told to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives. I think most of us now know someone who has had COVID-19 or even worse, has died from it. The current numbers are worrying and the speed of transmission of the new variant is frightening. If I could put a big protective curtain around staff and pupil families I would – but as I can't, we need to work together to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

As a school we are now presented with our own staffing challenges. As from tomorrow I have a number of Critically Extremely Vulnerable staff who must begin shielding again, I have a number of Critically Vulnerable staff who I want to protect, I have many pregnant staff who I want to protect and I have many staff that are now facing their own child care issues because the critical worker places in their own child's school are limited.

Due to these staffing challenges we are prioritising places at school for our most vulnerable learners (looked after children, safeguarding etc) and children of critical workers. We will be providing remote learning for everyone else and will keep the level and quality of communication with families as we did in the first lockdown. I know this is far from ideal, but we will try our very best to accommodate everyone, or provide a rota of respite for others. Children will not be in their 'normal' classes and will not be taught by their 'normal' staff team, they may not be in the room they are used to. We have had to look at pupil numbers, staff numbers and medically trained staff to make decisions.

If there are any resources etc that you require please just ask your class teacher. Please also remember staff need a break as well and will not be responding to emails after work.

Staff that are working in school will have a weekly flow test and where we have secondary pupils (age 11+), if they are able to administer the test themselves and we have parental permission we will test them before returning.

The Prime Minister hinted last night that this would be until February half term (6 weeks), and let's hope everyone follows the rules so we can get back to normality as quickly as possible.

Annual reviews will continue but via zoom/Teams or telephone – whichever you prefer. We need and want to keep this process going as it is extremely important for our learners. Mrs Thompson will be in touch with our Year 11, 12, 13 and 14 leavers (July 2021) to make sure the placements and transition goes as smoothly as possible. If your child is in Year 11, 12 or 13 and you feel due to this disruption you would like them to stay with us another year, please let Mrs Thompson know as soon as possible so she can talk to you. You can email her at office@wfs.worcs.sch.uk

We are still awaiting Government guidance to see if the Free School Meal vouchers will be in place, or if school needs to provide hampers. As soon as we know we will let you know.

As of yet we do not know if we are allowed to run holiday club February half term. I will do everything I can to make this happen, but it will only be for 3 days (Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday) if we are able to. This will give a natural 72 hr break from the building either side of the holiday.

I will continue to provide you with weekly letters and updates so you can stay well informed and Kathryn Vaughan would love to use your photos to create a weekly newsletter. A small thing that makes us feel like we're all together.

I can honestly say I wouldn't want to be at any other school in these terrible and challenging times. If there is anything you want to ask me or tell me please email me head@wfs.worcs.sch.uk and I will get back to you.

Thank you so much for your continuing support,



Bec Garratt
Headteacher

