

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### Change to the End of Term

Further to the recent announcement by the Government I am writing to confirm that the school will close on **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December**. The reason for this change of date for the end of term for students is to give families with plans to meet up with other members of the family some reassurances. The expectation of the Government and Public Health England is that school staff will be on hand to conduct their Track and Trace protocols for 6 days after the school has closed for the end of term. From day 7 onwards these protocols will be suspended until school reopens on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

If the school is open on 18<sup>th</sup> December the Track and Trace protocols will still be active on Christmas Eve and so a family could potentially be contacted on that day to be told that their son / daughter has been identified as a close contact and must therefore enter into a period of self-isolation. Naturally this would stop a family from being able to travel to see relatives or host visitors over the Christmas period. It seems unreasonable, given the 6 day rule, to be contacting families as late as Christmas Eve. By closing the school on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December, the 6 day rule ends on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. If a family has not heard from us by 23<sup>rd</sup> December they can be sure that they will not be contacted by the school with news of self-isolation and plans for Christmas Eve and the Christmas period can go ahead.

It is important to note that if a student tests positive for coronavirus (Covid-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours after being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

For the first 6 days after the end of term on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December, in other words up to 23<sup>rd</sup> December, if a student tests positive for coronavirus (Covid-19), having developed symptoms within the first 48 hours after the end of term, the school must be informed so that we can use our Track and Trace protocols to identify close contacts and inform their family.

Please see the link below to guidance from the Government regarding a member of the family with symptoms or a positive test result:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Whilst it is regrettable that our end of term for students will be Thursday rather than Friday and a day of learning appears to be lost, for families of students in Year 8 and above you will be aware that our last day of term before the break for Christmas is usually a relaxed affair. In previous years we have run the first two lessons on that day, but in truth they have usually had something of a festive feel to them with quizzes and music. After the morning break that follows the second lesson the students have moved into their mentor rooms to await their call to move to the sports hall for our end of term celebration assembly after which the students have been dismissed for the holidays.

Due to our Covid control measures we will not be gathering in the sports hall, but will hold our celebration assembly, which includes details about our award winners as well as some entertainment, through our screens in the classrooms. We plan to run as normal our four lessons that occur before lunch on a typical day. After lunch during period 5 we will allow them to watch our celebration assembly. The students will be dismissed at the normal time of 14:40

It will be a non-uniform day as has been our tradition for many years, but for our older students in Year 11 and the Sixth Form the expectation is clear; they will be having their normal planned curriculum lessons. It is important that we keep the formal learning going for these students for as long as possible. Their festive downtime will be part of their period 5 on the last day of term. By taking this approach in truth it means that these students are losing only part of one real taught lesson through the school closing on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

I should like to take this opportunity to say thank you again for your continued support and understanding in these unusual times.

I hope that you and your family have a wonderful Christmas together.

With my best wishes to you and your family

**Philip Stack**  
**Headteacher**