

Court Fields School

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Ref: Update Letter to Parents 311020

31st October 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your family well and keeping safe, as we navigate what continues to be a difficult time for all of us. The Prime Minister has tonight confirmed that increasing Covid levels across the country, as well as in Somerset, will have further impacts on all our lives, with a month-long lockdown to be put in place from Thursday 5th November. This will not currently impact our school, and we hope that we will be able to keep school open for all our students, accessing a full curriculum. Thank you for your continued support over the Half Term period, as we dealt with the challenge of our first positive Covid cases in school.

General Update:

We have had a total of 4 positive student and one staff case in our school community. Our processes to prevent positive cases, and to deal with them, have been praised by Public Health and Somerset County Council. I thank you for your support with this challenge, and your concern for those affected. The 4 students affected were all within the Year 8 bubble, and identified as close contacts of each other, either inside or out of school. The member of staff concerned had not been in school during the incubation/infectious period, and did not have any close contacts with either students or staff. Thanks to all our Year 8 parents/carers in particular, as well as our Year 8 students for dealing with what I'm sure was a very disappointing Half Term.

- All students in Years 7, 9, 10 & 11 should return to school on Monday 2nd November, unless they are self-isolating or display potential Covid symptoms.
- Year 8 students should return on Tuesday 3rd November, following their Year Group self-isolation, unless they, or anyone in their household, have displayed symptoms since the original self-isolation date.

Please do speak with your child about the importance of following staff instructions to the letter, particularly with reference to moving around the site, one-way and no entry systems, sanitising and responding quickly to staff requests. This helps to keep your child and our staff safe, as well as underlining our high expectations of good manners and behaviour.

It is also vital, as we see Covid cases nationally on the rise, that students keep an appropriate social distance from each other at social times and outside school. This helps to keep our community safe, and limits the amount of 'close contacts' who need to self-isolate, if we have a further positive case.

Remote Learning & Learning@Home:

We have 2 ways to support students to continue their learning if they are not able to attend school:

Learning@Home: this is put in place if we have a full lockdown and school closure, as happened in the Summer Term. We hope that this is unlikely to be required.

Remote Learning: this allows individual students or part/full Year Groups to access learning whilst self-isolating. This is accessed via our Remote Learning microsite using the direct link below, or via our website: <https://sites.google.com/courtfields.net/court-fields-school/home> (this link is currently set up for Year 8).

I attach a Remote Learning Guide for Parents/Carers and Students, to ensure that you are fully prepared should your child need to self-isolate. Year 8 students should log on and access their learning by 9am on Monday 2nd November.



Teaching & Learning:

The feedback from staff regarding learning in lessons has been very positive. We have not been focussing on 'catching-up', as students will have covered more in some areas, and less in others than a 'normal' year. Instead our staff have used their expert knowledge of our students and the curriculum, alongside frequent 'low-stakes assessment' (short quizzes etc.) to identify areas to revisit or recap, as well as embedding new knowledge. Some students, especially those in Key Stage 4, will have to continue getting used to an increased pace of learning, but we have every confidence they will continue to step-up, and ensure that their focus is fully on learning.

We have also developed a clear set of expectations which are included in our Parent Guide Version 10 (attached to this email). This allows students to be very clear on the expectations for the start of each lesson, which of course, will have been a change after nearly 6 months out of formal in-school education. Our students have acquitted themselves very well since their return in September, but, as you know, I do not apologise for pursuing the highest standards of good manners and behaviour, so please do remind your child of the importance of these expectations each day. Once again, thank you for your support, ensuring that your child is equipped to learn and ready to focus on their studies each lesson.

We have also emailed all parents/carers details of our Teaching & Learning (T&L) focus for this year. This follows our significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning over the last 18 months. It is vital that your child takes a full part in the high quality learning in each lesson, and is aware of the T&L focus each half term, as this will help them to make accelerated progress. The T&L focus for this term is 'Challenge'. This means students always working at a level which is slightly beyond the level they are already at. Students should not spend lessons repeating work at which they are already expert, but should instead be taken slightly out of their comfort zone, and be tackling new, but achievable learning. Our teachers 'teach to the top', scaffolding work to ensure every student is successful. Please do talk to your child about their learning in lessons, discuss where they have felt challenged, and support them in ensuring that they are active learners each day.

There may be no more challenging time to be a school leaver, than in the coming few years. The employment market will be sure to be a difficult place, and it is imperative that we all work together; students, staff and parents, to ensure that in every lesson, our young people make the progress they need towards the outcomes they require. Thank you as always for your support with this. I know many parents/carers find an end of the day conversation with their child whilst looking at ClassCharts together very productive. It helps conversations about what went well and what could be better, as well as allowing an easy focus on any outstanding homework that needs to be completed for the following day.

Preventing the Spread of the Virus:

What is, of course, particularly important, is that students adhere to the hygiene guidance. The best way to combat the spread of coronavirus is through good hand and respiratory hygiene. Sanitisers are provided at each entry/exit point on the site, in toilets, in communal areas, and in every classroom. Please underline to them the importance of following the hygiene guidance rigidly each day. It is also vital that students maintain distancing when this is possible, certainly not physically contacting one another, and following the lockdown guidance outside of school.

It is also important that students time their arrival to school appropriately, so they are not congregating in the Park or on the footpath, which are not appropriate areas for students to gather before school. As previously mentioned, students should also not be meeting outside of their homes, in line with the lockdown guidance.

We hope that our considerable planning and implementation of our safety measures by our whole community, alongside the national measures, will help to ensure that we do not see further cases of the virus in our school. We were complimented by Public Health on our response to the recent positive cases, and we now have a proven, tested process in place should this be needed again. Once again, please do remind your child of the need to reduce the number of 'close contacts'. This helps to prevent Public Health England requesting that a whole Year group have to self-isolate. Close contacts are defined as:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

Updated Guidance on Main Covid Symptoms:

NHS England have updated the guidance on their website to make it easier for parents, carers and schools to identify the main symptoms of coronavirus and next steps if symptoms are displayed:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

What to do if your child (or you/anyone you live with/anyone in your support bubble) displays one or more of these main symptoms:

- Get a test to check if they have coronavirus as soon as possible.
- Stay at home and do not have visitors until you get the test result – only leave your home to have a test.
- Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get the result.

If you are concerned that your child may be displaying symptoms, which you cannot immediately identify as the main Covid symptoms, please do keep them at home and under observation for 24 hours. If they do show any of the main symptoms then please book a test and follow the information above. If not, and the symptoms continue to be just that of a common cold etc, then please do send them back into school, when fit enough to return.

Finally, I would just like to repeat my thanks to you for your support. You are an incredible community of parents and carers, and I feel incredibly lucky to work with you. We have come so far together, I am so proud of what we have achieved, and I am excited to share our continued improvement with you this academic year.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any other questions/queries. Telephone lines are manned between 8am and 4pm, but may be busy, so you may wish to use our key email contacts as follows:

- For safeguarding concerns, please use the following email address: safeguarding@courtfields.net
- For ClassCharts or any other IT technical enquiries, please use the following dedicated email address: classcharts@courtfields.net
- To contact our SENCO, or for SEN questions, please use the following email address: sen@courtfields.net
- For any contact or queries regarding your child's academic or pastoral wellbeing, please email their Tutor in the format initialsurname@courtfields.net. They are your first and key point of contact. We also sent the email address for each Tutor to the parents/carers of all members of their Tutor Group last term, for your convenience.
- For general enquiries, please use the main email address: sch.552@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Thank you once again for your support, which is very much appreciated. My very best wishes go out to you and your families.

Keep safe and keep in touch.

Yours sincerely,



MRS POLLY MATTHEWS
Acting Headteacher