

11 September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

At the end of a busy but successful week with all of our year groups in school, I want to pass on my thanks to the whole school community for pulling together and making it such a success. We have welcomed our new Year 7, who have settled in incredibly well despite the circumstances, and we have enjoyed seeing the pupils from our other year groups re-join us, having not seen them properly for such a long time. There have been lots of new routines to learn and everyone has responded incredibly well – whilst I am not surprised by that, I am grateful! We have left no stone unturned in trying to prepare the school to make it the safest we possibly can and students have risen to the challenge of contributing to that safety. My thanks to them and to you for all of the help and assistance afforded to the school.

Of course, as time progresses we will need to make amendments to our processes and therefore need to be flexible in our response to the ongoing situation. We always try to apply common sense in our decision making to ensure that the potential risks are reasonably controlled and students can stay safe and stay learning. There will be some small modifications to the operation of the school from Monday which will be communicated to students during their first lesson next week. I also ask for your support in encouraging your child(ren) to assist us by ensuring that they have their face covering at all times and wear them in the corridors at changeover of lessons and in other communal areas. If it is your/your child's express wish that a face covering should not be worn, please supply them with a note to this effect which will excuse them from doing so and prevent them from being challenged. We will also continue to impress upon our students the altruistic nature of face coverings.

You will, of course, be aware of the growing number of instances where students and/or staff have been asked to self-isolate following confirmed cases of infections within schools and settings. With that in mind, and in the spirit of transparency, I thought it beneficial that I clarify our planned response in the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in school. I hope this allays any concerns that you have.

As you know, a person confirmed to have been infected with Covid-19 will be asked to indicate who they have recently come into contact with. This is to ensure that these individuals are able to self-isolate to reduce the spread of the virus. Given our school population is over 1,250 people, this can have a significant impact. I would be grateful, therefore, that should you need to make us aware of a positive test result for your child that you include official correspondence from the NHS Wales Test,

Trace and Protect Service, including the unique reference number which confirms either a positive test result or that your child has been identified as a confirmed contact.

It is becoming apparent that confirmed cases are more likely to be shared with schools by families before external agencies may be able to notify us. This is not surprising as the national availability of data and information regarding Covid-19 appears to have some delays associated with it.

In the event of being notified by a parent/carer or the local Public Health Protection Team of a confirmed case of Covid-19 within our school community we will rapidly take steps in order to safeguard the rest of the school. We will actively take advice from Public Health Wales and the Local Authority as to whether a specific group of students, a cohort or indeed the whole school will be required to self-isolate. I very much hope that the latter will only ever be considered as an absolute last resort. Should the need arise for students to self-isolate we will advise the parents of that group first and then communicate to the rest of the school community the steps that we have taken. We will also simultaneously activate our continuity of learning contingency plan to ensure that all pupils, even if they are required to stay at home to self-isolate, will benefit from some learning experiences. We will provide more details of that should it be required.

I am very conscious that we are reliant, now more than ever, on the goodwill of families and the students themselves to help keep everyone as safe as possible through this crisis and to keep everyone learning. Your ongoing support is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr. S. Budgen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mr. S. Budgen  
Headteacher