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Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

18 December 2020

Dear Parents

You should receive a number of communications from the school at the end of term including this letter and the Oaklands News. This letter is slightly longer than I had intended, but given the fluidity of the current situation I need to keep you informed of developments. **It is very important that all parents read this letter and take note of the information.**

Lateral Testing

Since I started putting pen to paper this week the Government have released, on the cusp of the end of term, information concerning the introduction of lateral flow testing in school. I received most of the detail after 6.00pm on Thursday 17th December. This gives you a sense of the problems we now face.

The Governors and I are very concerned about the feasibility of setting up a testing programme at the scale envisaged. There are over 30,000 schools in the UK across all phases, State and Independent. This is a huge exercise requiring processes to be established and communicated, parental permission to be obtained, and doubtless innumerable other logistical issues to be overcome. Finding appropriate staff or volunteers before January, who are prepared to administer the tests, will be challenging.

I am uneasy about intruding over the Christmas holiday, however such is the timing of this announcement, I will have to write to you again over the break.

At this stage there is some information I can share with you.

The Government have allowed schools to take an extra INSET day **on Monday 4th January, so the school will be closed to all students.** This provides us with a small window to consider some of the logistics and plan for on-line learning.

From Tuesday 5th January through to Friday 8th January inclusive, the school will only be open to Year 11 and Year 13, plus vulnerable students and students with key worker parents. On Monday (4th January), parents will receive another letter to assist us with the identification of other groups of students that the Government has advised should be in school. In line with the DfE guidance, students not in school will receive the daily equivalent of four hours online learning. We will confirm the structure of this towards the end of the holiday.

Monday 11th January school will full reopen to all students. Normal timetable will resume as a Week 1.

Tier 3

Yesterday we were made aware that Havant, similar to other areas in the South East, has gone into Tier 3. It is widely accepted that there has been a significant increase in the virus amongst secondary school children. This plays into the lateral test narrative. After previous national restrictions, many of you commented about how difficult it is to understand how you can permit hundreds of youngsters and staff to spend large parts of the day together, yet children can't see their friends at home over the weekend. Schools generally remain safe places where, for us, there is little evidence of in-school transmission. COVID-19 is very rarely serious for children.

COVID-19 Cases over the Christmas Holiday

In my letter last week I indicated to you that the school has a responsibility to trace COVID-19 cases over Christmas.

In reality this means that if a student or member of staff tested positive up to and including Saturday 19th December, the school would have to notify families of those students who had been in school if their child was a close contact.

The table below follows the current DfE guidance where schools are asked to look at the two day period before the day of the onset of symptoms:

Date of Symptoms	Infectious Period
17 th December	15 th and 16 th December
18 th December	16 th and 17 th December
19 th December	17 th and 18 th December
20 th December	18 th and 19 th December

For example, if a student developed symptoms on Friday 18th December and went for a test on Saturday 19th December with a positive result on the 20th or 21st December, the school will have to trace students and staff in school on Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th December.

If your child develops symptoms they should be tested and school informed by emailing Provision@oaklandscatholicschool.org

If your child has a confirmed case please email Provision@oaklandscatholicschool.org as soon as the results are known. We also need to know if the result is negative for our records.

If we are notified of a confirmed case, we will contact parents as required using the email and parent text service.

Parents also have a responsibility to notify the school if a student is being tested or has a confirmed case at the beginning of the new term. Please notify us by Sunday 3rd January by emailing Provision@oaklandscatholicschool.org.

Please do not use any other telephone numbers, email addresses or contacts apart from the Provision email, as this is the only one which will be monitored over the holidays between 18th December and 4th January. Please do not delay in providing us with any of the information requested.

Please do not send your child into school:

- **If they have COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for a test or the result of a test.**
- **If they have a positive test result.**
- **If someone in the household is awaiting a test result or has tested positive.**

End of Term

This term has been a team effort between the school, our pupils and our families. Many of the things we hold precious about spiritual development, learning and working at Oaklands have been hard to maintain as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, at a time when family life has also been difficult for so many.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to you all for the support you have given to your children and the school, especially when faced with notices of self-isolation and remote learning. Whilst the quality of our remote education provision has developed rapidly since March, we know that it is not a substitute for being in school, learning face to face and spending time with peers. Getting students back into school on the 11th January has to be a priority.

We are optimistic about a slow return to normal school at some point in 2021, however I think the period from January until Easter will have its challenges even before we consider lateral flow testing. We are looking forward to re-establishing extra-curricular activities, trips, visits and group work in lessons when it is safe to do so.

My thanks also extend to the staff, Governors and Oaklands Friends and Parents' Association who have adapted to a new way of working in some very challenging circumstances.

We all now need a break and time to recuperate.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher