

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Our Ref: MQ/SM

13 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

No one week is anything like another. This week in school we held our two-minute silence. I was very grateful to one of our Sixth Form students who played the Last Post and helped to create the appropriate solemnity to mark this sign of remembrance. From the earliest days of Christianity, the Church has honoured with great respect the memory of the dead. The whole month of November is an interesting time of prayer in the Catholic Church as it is filled with many important feast days and includes the days on which we commemorate all the Saints and all the faithful departed.

Following the start of the new lockdown, some of you may be feeling anxious due to the rising numbers of COVID-19 infections. No doubt this has not been helped by a very small number of unrelated cases which have occurred in school within Key Stage 3. We have again had to send students and staff home to isolate. Similar to last time, we followed the information provided by the DfE and Public Health England which appears to be evolving. The advice we received confirmed that, **'The default should not be to self-isolate the whole class or bubble in a secondary setting'**. These situations are difficult to manage and I thank all parents affected for the support they have shown.

I also want to praise the manner in which students have behaved when they received notice that they needed to go home and self-isolate. They all acted with great maturity and understanding of a difficult situation.

Please remember that it is vitally important that if your child is displaying symptoms, they do not come to school. They must be tested. Please let us know if you have taken them to be tested. They, and their siblings, must remain away from school and the family must isolate until you have the results.

A student can only come back into school if the test results are negative. We would appreciate it if parents could send a screenshot / photo of the result and email it to absence@oaklandscatholicschool.org

If the result is positive, we need to know as soon as possible using either the absence line absence@oaklandscatholicschool.org during school hours or Provision@oaklandscatholicschool.org out of hours.

Please do not delay in informing the school of a positive test result.

Managing School with Reduced Staff

Whilst we remain fully committed to keeping Oaklands fully open to all year groups, we must also ensure that we can do so effectively and safely, and this does require an ongoing review and consideration of staffing levels. With this in mind, I want to advise you of the risk mitigation steps we have put in place with due regard to any reduction in staffing levels we need to respond to for day to day management of:

1. The number of clinically extremely vulnerable staff having to work from home if they have received the letter advising them of the need to do this.
2. Staff having to self-isolate if needed, in line with national test, track and trace or in cases of staff themselves displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
3. Staff absence levels reported at any time, relating to non-COVID reasons.
4. Availability of supply staff to support cover as required.
5. Ensuring essential cover regarding safeguarding and inclusion, First Aid and Site and Premises – Health and Safety.

Should a situation arise whereby we do not have sufficient staffing to support full, safe opening of the school, the decision will be made to partially close one or more year groups and we will advise parents immediately with regard to details of such a partial closure.

Where this is required, year groups affected by a partial closure will move immediately to a remote learning timetable and will be fully supported in learning at home so that their education provision is not adversely affected. How we manage online learning can be found following [this link](#).

We will provide as much notice as is possible with regard to any necessary partial closure, and we sincerely hope that we do not need to implement this step. However, we ask for your continued understanding and appreciation that we need to keep this under constant review; we may have to act swiftly in response to identified need, in order to safeguard the safety and well-being of all our students, staff and community.

Work for Students Currently Isolating in Year 7 and Year 9

During the current isolation period, online work may not be set for PDC, Technology and Games or PE. Unfortunately, it will be necessary to collapse classes in these subjects on some occasions, making it difficult to maintain online work that is sequenced with work set before lockdown.

Face Coverings in School

The use of face coverings in corridors and shared areas of the school is now mandatory. I have been very pleased with the response to this directive from the vast majority of students. If your child is exempt on medical grounds, please can I ask that you email the details to Mrs Oldroyd julie.oldroyd@oaklandscatholicschool.org then we can put in place the correct measures to ensure your child is not challenged by staff.

Clinically Vulnerable Children

More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming extremely unwell from COVID-19, even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to shield. Speak to your GP or specialist, if you have not already done so, to understand whether your child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. Please email Mrs Oldroyd julie.oldroyd@oaklandscatholicschool.org if you need to discuss your child's specific health needs related to shielding.

Hand Hygiene

The advice remains that good hand hygiene is one of the most effective measures to reduce the spread of the virus, and we continue to remind students that this is important. Hand sanitiser is used on entrance to and exit from all classrooms; desks are sanitised twice a day. Please also remind your child to wash/sanitise their hands before eating anything, after going to the toilet and at other regular intervals throughout the day.

Uniform and Ventilation

I have placed these in the same area as they are linked! Good ventilation has been increasingly cited as a useful preventative measure so we will be keeping windows open in classrooms as much as is reasonable. This means that classrooms are not as warm as they once were. We are ensuring that they do not get too cold, however please remind your child to wear layers – a plain white t-shirt under their shirt or blouse as well as, or instead of a vest, as well as a jumper with their blazer. There are plenty of options to keep warm and still remain smart in the Oaklands uniform.

Remember – Hands, Face, Space

- **Hands** – wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
- **Face** – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- **Space** – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors)

Events Next Week

Next week is national Anti-Bullying week, the theme this year is 'United Against Bullying'. Students will have resources delivered to them by their tutors through The Oaklands Way weekly PowerPoint and will be directed to where they can go to get support and advice. We have a number of trained Diana Award student Anti-Bullying Ambassadors in school that students can go to rather than a teacher if they feel more comfortable talking to their peers.

Please follow the link to the parent presentation from our ESafety consultant, Lee Haywood. The virtual assembly we are holding in school is the one which is shared with all Havant Federation schools as part of a joint initiative.

<https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Year-7-Parent-Online-Safety.ppsx>

Next week is also Road Safety Week. There is a dedicated area on our website which parents may find useful as children are travelling home in the dark

<https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/parents/road-safety/>

Best wishes and keep safe.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher