

19 October 2020

Dear parents and carers

### Update October 2020

As the first half term of the year draws to a close, I am writing to thank you for all your support over the past few weeks. It has been a strange time for all of us, but within the constraints of 'covid security' we have tried to create as normal an environment as possible for our students to reassure them, give them continuity and a focus on their future. We are very pleased that attendance has averaged at 94% since September, which is significantly above the national average of 86%. We are thankful that we have not had a case of coronavirus in school, but we remain vigilant and insistent on students and staff hand sanitising and cleaning classrooms every hour. We are reviewing our risk assessments for every aspect of school life in the next few days and will write to you if there are any changes to the current arrangements after half term (eg face masks in communal areas). Thank you for ensuring that your child has sanitiser and a face mask for the bus - this is very helpful.

I have a few pieces of information to share with you:

### Road Closure 26<sup>th</sup> October – 3<sup>rd</sup> November

I have attached all the information I have from Balfour Beatty about this road closure to this email. Fortunately, the first week is half term, so most people will only be affected on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the first week back to school after half term. Balfour Beatty have tried to accommodate school traffic, so on the Monday and Tuesday when we come back, the road works will start at 9.30am and finish at 3.30pm, to allow parents to get away from school in the morning and to be able to pick up their children in the evening.

If you are dropping off or picking up, please can I remind you that the 'one way' system along the front of the school is crucial to our children's safety, especially as the weather gets worse and the lane is muddy and wet. If you are waiting in the village at the end of the day, please be considerate to residents of Peterchurch and leave driveways and road exits clear.

### Parents' evenings

So far this term there have been two calendared 'Meet the Tutor' evenings which we have replaced with phone calls and emails. Whilst this is not quite the same as meeting face to face, it seems to have worked quite well and we are looking at how to organise a similar system for subject-based parents' evenings, which are a bit more complicated. We will be sending home information in November about the evenings scheduled until Christmas. If you have concerns which you would like to discuss with staff at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us via the school office.

### Uniform

Thank you for your all your support in sending your children to school smartly dressed and with the correct equipment. As the weather gets colder and wetter, please make sure that your child has a warm, waterproof coat and black sturdy shoes that will cope with mud and rain! Our uniform expectations are clearly set out in the student planner, the prospectus and on our website. Uniform is meant to be practical for a busy day - some of the skirts we are seeing older girls wearing are too short and too tight. If your daughter cannot easily and comfortably sit on the floor in her skirt, then she needs a new one! Most importantly, please ensure everything has a NAME in it; we already have significant amounts of lost property that we cannot return because it is unnamed.

Following government guidance to reduce infection rates, we will be trying to keep our classrooms ventilated over the winter which is likely to mean colder classrooms. Students will not be allowed to wear their coats for lessons, but we will allow a plain white long-sleeved base layer under polo shirts from half term onwards. Trousers with thick socks or tights underneath and warm footwear are also a good idea! Black boots under trousers are acceptable - no trousers tucked in please.

### **Remote/Blended learning**

I am sure you will have seen in the media that schools are now obliged to provide remote or 'blended' learning if a child is sent home from school. This only applies in particular circumstances as the DfE makes clear:

*It should be noted that the legal obligation on schools only applies to pupils who are unable to attend school due to Covid-19 – i.e. they have been told not to attend school by the school itself, by a public health authority or due to local school closures (not currently in place anywhere in England). It does not apply to pupils absent for any other reasons, or to pupils whose parents elect not to send them to school, despite them being able to. The direction is not a parental choice between remote learning and being in school: it only applies to pupils who have been told they cannot attend school because of public health guidance.*

We have spent a lot of time this half term ensuring that every child in school knows how to access Google Classroom so that should we have to close because of a government lockdown, or should individuals or groups have to go home because of coronavirus, we are ready to learn! We are already using Google Classroom to set, mark and feedback on homework, and to post the lesson powerpoints so that students can look at them again to help their understanding. If there is a complete lockdown for more than a few days, we will revert to the daily online lessons on Google Meet for all our students that were so successful in the summer term. We are continuing to explore how we can best use Google Classroom to help students who are not in school to keep up with their lessons and, most importantly, to still feel part of the Fairfield Family even though they are at home and we have had some very positive results in the early stages.

### **Half term**

Last year we agreed to add a day to half term to allow families to be able to get away for a long weekend. I'm not sure many of us will be going anywhere in the current circumstances, but we have kept **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October** as part of half term, so we will break up on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October** and return to school on **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November**.

With best wishes for an enjoyable break, whatever you are doing!

*S. Gaston.*

Sue Gaston  
Head Teacher