

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

### Re – Half Term

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of what has been a challenging but thoroughly enjoyable half-term, I am writing to you for a number of reasons.

Firstly, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the fantastic support, co-operation and good humour which has been on constant display in the most challenging of times. A number of you have been asked to collect your child from school in the middle of the day as they were displaying symptoms, and this has always been done promptly and without complaint. Similarly, parents have been keeping their children at home if they have developed symptoms during the weekend or overnight and informing the school as soon as possible. **This is incredibly important** and is a huge part of the reason that we are yet to have a positive case affecting school attendance – I hope I am not speaking too soon on this one!

Drop-off and collection is now working very smoothly and, with your help, we have ironed out most of the concerns we had around road safety. We are still working to improve this further and have made an appeal to NYCC to look at installing flashing 20 mph signs in the vicinity of school, to increase the number of static 20 mph signs and to repaint the faded yellow lines which serve to provide some separation between road and pavement outside our car park.

### Covid-communications over half term

To ensure that all the good practice that the Western community has demonstrated in the past seven weeks isn't undone, it is critical that we keep lines of communication open at least until midday on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October in relation to test results. This is because we have to identify staff and students who have been in contact with a positive case in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or 48 hours prior to the test outcome where a person is asymptomatic.

For example: if a pupil develops symptoms on Sunday morning, gets tested on Monday and a positive outcome is received on Tuesday, we would need to contact all staff and pupils who had contact with that person during Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October and advise that they need to self-isolate. Please note that, if your child has been in contact with a positive case, you should only get them tested if they begin to show symptoms. Instead, your child should self-isolate for 14 days. Other household members would only need to self-isolate if this child then developed symptoms.



Please use this link to access the latest guidance for households: [\*\*COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection\*\*](#)

*Please see the instructions below for following up a positive test outcome during half term.*

### **What to do if your child tests positive up to midday on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October**

1. As soon as a positive test result is confirmed for your child, please send an email to [covid@western.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:covid@western.n-yorks.sch.uk) This is a new email address which will be monitored by a member of the SLT up until midday on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October. **Please do not use any other email address as only this one will be monitored.** If for any reason you are not able to email this information, please contact a friend who may be able to email on your behalf. If a positive test outcome is received after this date and time, you do not need to contact school immediately but your household should self-isolate and you should contact the parents of any friends your child has had contact with in the preceding days of the holiday. Notify school on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November to let us know that your child/children is/are self-isolating.
2. Your email needs to contain the following information:
  - i) Name of pupil
  - ii) Class and year group, also maths class if this differs from class
  - iii) Date, time and outcome of test
  - iv) Date and time of when symptoms first presented
  - v) Date when self-isolation began
  - vi) Whether any siblings attend a school other than Western
  - vii) Names of close friends your child may have been in contact with at break and lunchtimes

Once we receive notification of a positive test result, members of the SLT will confer, in consultation with the Trust, and determine which pupils were contacts of the positive case and who therefore need to self-isolate.

### **How will this information be communicated?**

Communication will be in two forms:

1. Parents will receive a brief text message to their mobile phone, alerting them that they have been sent an email via Arbor.
2. An email will be sent to all affected families via Arbor. This email will inform you of the need for your child to self-isolate and when he/she may return to school.
3. A letter will also be emailed to the rest of the school community to ensure everyone is informed – no names will be used.
4. Before term starts, a further email will be sent to affected parents reminding them of our arrangements for remote learning during a period of self-isolation.
5. Where a child entitled to benefits-related free school meals is self-isolating, a further email will be sent, detailing arrangements for providing food parcels.



We will be able to check on Arbor whether messages have been received and will do our best to contact parents by phone where a communication has failed.

### **Staff wellbeing**

As you can imagine, this has been a particularly testing time for all of our staff. Those whose jobs require them to cross bubbles, are having to wear visors all day which can be uncomfortable and inconvenient. Support staff working in smaller rooms are having to work with doors open, increasing the noise and disturbance levels from other areas. A significant number of our teaching staff are continuing to work – in line with government guidance – despite being on the clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable lists. All of this is adding to stress levels and, as a school, we are looking at all the options we have for reducing stress and ensuring, in particular, that we minimise the extent to which work impinges on home life.

One of the steps we have taken in this respect is to instruct staff not to send emails between the hours of 5.30 p.m. and 7.30 a.m. Monday – Friday or at any time during the weekend. Exceptions to this rule would be urgent communications of a medical nature for example.

I now need to ask parents and carers to do their best to follow these guidelines too. In recent discussions with staff, as part of the appraisal process, we have found that they regularly receive emails or Classlist messages from parents/carers over weekends and late into the evening on school nights. One member of staff actually received a Classlist message at 4.15 a.m.! It is easy to say that staff could choose to not look at these messages but we all recognise how difficult it can be to do this. I would never ignore a message from a parent at any time as it could be vitally important, but it is a little frustrating, to say the least, when I find it is a trivial matter which could have waited until the next school day.

So, I am asking all of our parents and carers to respect the times when staff are at home with their families and only to contact them in extremely urgent cases which can't wait until the next school day.

There is no indication yet that the situation for schools will be any different after the holiday, so please expect us to be open as usual with the existing arrangements still in place. We will of course let you know if anything changes in the meantime.

Although it is extremely difficult to totally relax in these troubling times, I hope you all manage to spend quality time as families yourselves over the half-term break and we look forward to seeing you all again on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Kind regards,

Tim Broad  
Headteacher

