



10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As always, I hope you and your family are well and I appreciate that this is another detailed update. However, circumstances change very quickly at the moment and there is important information to share with you regards the end of term.

On Tuesday the Government released its latest advice for schools that would allow them to close for the Christmas Holiday a day early by taking a training day on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. The purpose of this is to ensure that schools can effectively follow Public Health England advice and carry out its Test and Trace duty before Christmas Eve. The additional day also provides the whole school community with a longer break before Christmas to reduce the risk of needing to self-isolate during this period. Throughout the pandemic we have always prioritised the safety of everyone at Stafford Manor High School alongside maintaining a quality education, and believe that by closing school a day earlier than planned continues that theme. The learning time lost on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December will be regained later in the year when we originally had planned for a training day on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June. Pupils will now be expected to attend school on this day instead. **Therefore, I can confirm that school will close for the Christmas holiday at the end of the day on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December.** Thursday will be a full school day and should you have any queries around these arrangements then please do not hesitate to contact us at school.

I am sure that you are also aware that now we are well into the final two weeks of term, there is a risk that if we have to inform pupils to self-isolate this will extend into the Christmas holiday. Clearly we want to avoid this happening so please follow all existing guidance and do not send your child to school if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or someone in your household has tested positive or is showing symptoms and awaiting a test. You must seek a test for your child if they are showing one or more of three main symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough, or a loss of taste and/or smell).

Following guidance released by Staffordshire County Council during November, we would also urge you to err on the side of caution in the final week and consider keeping your child at home if they are showing any of the following:

- Headaches
- aches and pains
- feeling tired for no good reason
- sore throat
- runny nose
- sneezing
- sometimes 'tummy ache' in children

Staffordshire County Council are asking residents to consider getting tested for COVID-19 as a precaution if they have any of the symptoms above. If you do need to keep your child at home then please do keep updating school regards your child's circumstances so we can take swift action if necessary.

Headteacher:  
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Should your child test positive for COVID-19 during the Christmas holiday we will still require you to inform the school, particularly during the first six days of the holiday. This is because there may be a need to inform other pupils to self-isolate if they were in contact with an individual during the infectious period. We have set up a dedicated email address that can be used during evenings, weekends and over the holiday period if you need to notify us of a positive test result. The contact email address is [C19@smhs.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:C19@smhs.staffs.sch.uk) and will be checked at least once every day.

It is crucial that you follow the Government advice below if your child develops symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19 during the first six days of the Christmas holiday.

- If your child develops symptoms on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> or Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December and subsequently tests positive (even if this is after Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December) then you must immediately contact the school. The school will then be required to identify any close contacts and inform parents as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.
- If a pupil develops symptoms from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December onwards, then parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. It would be helpful to inform school but we are not required to identify close contacts and inform parents in such circumstances.

Please be aware that between Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, school is not required to and will not be responding to any messages regards COVID-19. If your child is required to self-isolate due to being in contact with a positive case or tests positive themselves after the 24<sup>th</sup> December, you only need to inform school from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

**Pupils will return to school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.** At the start of the academic year we planned a training day for Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to provide an opportunity for school and staff to prepare for the term ahead in light of the latest circumstances and any updated guidance. This allows us to ensure risk assessments are fully reviewed and we continue to do everything feasibly possible to keep everyone safe and provide the very best education for your child.

Finally, I would like to make you aware of some festive activities that our amazing Student Council have organised for the last week of term. On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December they will be collecting food items to donate to the Rising Brook Food Bank. Your child can bring in any dried food or non-perishable items to donate and the Student Council will be taking them to the Food Bank later in the week. Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December will be a non-uniform day and an opportunity for pupils to wear a Christmas jumper to raise money for Save the Children. Unfortunately, this year we have been unable to complete the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal due to the restrictions and the Student Council felt a donation of £1 for charity to wear non-uniform would be a suitable alternative. They have also prepared Christmas quizzes, games and competitions for the pupils to complete throughout the week to get them into the festive spirit! I am sure you will agree that it is inspiring what our fantastic pupils will do for others during these difficult times.

If you do have any questions regards any of the information I have shared then please do contact us at school. Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher

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