



22nd February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to my first update of the new half term. I hope that you and your family managed to have a relaxing half term break and you are all safe and well. We are awaiting a formal announcement by the Government later today that will hopefully clarify exactly when and how children will be able to return to school from the 8th March. Although we are eager to welcome children back through the gates for face to face teaching, it is vital this is done in the safest way possible. As soon as we have confirmed details to share with you we will be in touch.

School has reopened today for the children of key workers and those classed as vulnerable. We continue to adhere to all aspects of our risk assessment to ensure we are doing all that is feasibly possible to keep people safe. For a number of weeks we have been using Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) in school to test staff in case anyone is asymptomatic. Identifying an individual who is displaying no symptoms but tests positive, will help us suppress potential transmission within school and the local community. From today, we have been offering children attending school the opportunity to take a LFD test on their return. This is an option and should a child or family choose not to have a test, they can continue to attend school as normal. However, offering children the opportunity to be tested only strengthens our system of controls and further protects everyone at Stafford Manor High School.

From this morning, we have restarted the setting of work and live support for children working at home. All the information on how to use Microsoft Teams to access the live aspect of our provision whilst at home can be found in the COVID section of our website. We know through all the feedback received last term that using Teams is incredibly helpful in supporting children with their work. During this half term the focus of learning will now shift to preparing children for their return to school. It is therefore vitally important that they access the live support and we will be in touch if your child is not engaging with work set. As always, we do appreciate the challenges faced at home, but it is crucial that you do all you can to help your children maintain the structure to their day and support them with accessing their learning. Completing work set will ensure they are fully prepared for their return to school when that day arrives. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and we are here should you need assistance with helping your child at home.

We are also awaiting confirmation on how GCSE and BTEC grades will be awarded this year following the consultation a few weeks ago. As soon as we have more information to share we will communicate with relevant families. For those Year 11 and 13 students who would be completing external exams this year, please be reassured that you will be awarded grades this summer. In the meantime, the best course of action is to continue to complete all work set by teachers and join the live support sessions through Teams. For all parents helping their children at home with their learning, the Government have released some advice that may help over the next few weeks – [Dr Elizabeth Kelly's top tips](#).

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Prior to half term we released the first episode in a 'mini-series' of video podcasts that are designed to provide some help and advice through these challenging times. The focus of the series is how to thrive during lockdown and will feature different member of staff each episode. You can view the video podcast via this link – [SMHS Video Podcast](#). Hopefully it may provide you and your child with some advice and encouragement whilst we wait for life to return to some sense of normality. Furthermore, Youth Mental Health Ambassador, Dr Alex George has shared his 'top five tips' for young people's good mental health and wellbeing. This is live on the Department for Education's [YouTube channel](#).

Before half term we also wrote to you regards the consultation of our Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) Policy. If you wish to provide us any feedback then the original letter and policy can be found on our website. Please ensure any feedback is returned to school before the end of the day on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.

As the days become longer and we move towards Spring, it feels as if we can be more hopeful about freedoms that may return later in the year. Indeed, I would encourage you not to dwell on the past but focus on what lies ahead. If you child has not engaged with work last half term, do not let this burden you with worry, but focus on what can be achieved this half term. We cannot change the past but we can have a strong influence on our future and can make sure we are doing the very best for our children given the circumstances. I am sure we will see children return to school in a few weeks and this will be a positive move for us all. In the meantime, if you do have any questions or need any assistance then please do not hesitate to contact us through the main school office. Stay positive and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



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