



4<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

2020 has certainly been a year like no other and I do hope that you and your family are well. I am sure you are aware that Staffordshire has now moved to Tier 3 and we will all be waiting for the Government review on the 16th December to see whether this status may be downgraded prior to the Christmas period. Whilst we remain positive around the news of a vaccination programme in the new year, it is vital we all continue to follow the advice on keeping a distance, regular hand washing, catching coughs and sneezes, and wearing face coverings to combat this terrible virus.

At Stafford Manor High School we continue to prioritise everyone's safety alongside maintaining a high quality of education. I must reassure you that all staff are relentless in ensuring pupils follow the systems and procedures at school to create a COVID secure environment for all. Thank you for supporting your child in following the advice that keeps us all safe. Please remember that all pupils must bring their face covering to school every day. No matter how long we must maintain the measures in school, we will continue to do everything that is feasible possible to protect the pupils, staff and all our families.

It remains crucial that your child must not attend school if they are showing any of the three main symptoms of COVID-19. Please do contact us immediately if this is the case or your child has tested positive for the virus. Furthermore, they must also stay at home and self-isolate if anyone in your household has symptoms or tests positive. If your child receives a positive test result in the evening or at the weekend then please let school know by using the following email address [C19@smhs.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:C19@smhs.staffs.sch.uk). You can also use this contact for any other coronavirus questions and full details on symptoms and self-isolation can be found at the end of this letter. Our website also contains lots of advice about COVID-19. <https://www.staffordmanorhighschool.com/covid-19-updates>

The decision to instruct a class or a year group to self-isolate is never taken lightly. We all fully understand the pressures that this brings at home. However, it is vitally important that we do follow the self-isolation guidance in such instances to protect each other.

New Government guidance released this week has outlined how, in extreme cases, the Department for Education could direct us to close if there is an extremely high number of coronavirus cases in our local area. The Government has said it will only do this as a last resort. However, if this does happen, we will stay open for vulnerable children, the children of critical workers, and pupils in years 11 and 13 (and other pupils due to take external exams this academic year). All other pupils will need to continue their learning from home until the restrictions are lifted. If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll continue to receive these while at home. We'll let you know further details of how this will work if our school is told to close.

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Should we be directed to close by the Government, we will be in direct contact with families of children who are classed as vulnerable to explain how they can attend school in a safe way. Critical workers are those who work in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services (including the justice system, religious staff, charities delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting)
- Local and national government who are involved in delivering the coronavirus response or essential public services
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services

It would be really helpful if you could please let us know if your family has had a change in circumstance which means you or your child now fall into these categories.

In the event that your child has to self-isolate for a period of time we will be providing remote learning through Show My Homework. Work will be provided that mirrors your child's existing timetable and continues the curriculum input that they would be receiving if they were attending school. We are improving the support we provide to pupils whilst at home by using Microsoft Teams to enhance the introduction of new learning and concepts whilst providing greater opportunities for interactions with teachers for support. Microsoft Teams can be accessed from home through Office 365 and we will be providing materials to support pupils and parents with this.

As we approach the end of the autumn term, there are a number of events that we will be doing slightly differently. Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer pupils the full traditional Christmas dinner due to the safety measures in place in the canteen. However, our fantastic catering team will be providing a range of festive treats over the next couple of weeks. During the last week we will have a roast dinner that will have some Christmas favourites included! Pupils can purchase any of these items in the normal way using their daily allowance on ParentPay. We will be following the Government guidance for schools and we will stay open until the final day of term on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. I will be sending out further details regards the final day of term in my communication with you next week.

We are pleased to hear that Staffordshire County Council have put into place a scheme to support the families of children who are eligible for Free School Meals over the Christmas holidays. Each family will receive a £30 eVoucher per eligible child to cover the two week period. Families will receive the link to activate their eVoucher as soon as we receive the codes in school. The Staffordshire Family Hub 'Emergency Grant for Food and Essential Supplies' has been available throughout these difficult times. If you feel you would benefit from some support to purchase food and emergency supplies then visit the Staffordshire Connects website or contact the relevant Family Hub Coordinator.

<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/service.page?id=3cCTTuv aGic>

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Looking ahead to next term we will be rescheduling school photographs for Year 10 and 11 pupils and will confirm a date in the new term. We will also be sharing with you how we intend to conduct parents evening so that you can find out about your child's progress at school. You may be aware that the Government have recently announced that GCSE and A Level exams will take place next summer. However, there will be some adaptations to support students and we await further details in the new year. In school, we will be talking through what we do currently know with our Year 11 and Year 13 students. When we have greater clarification from the Government, we will be informing parents so you know how best to support your child through the final few months before their exams. We have also been working hard on preparing other 'virtual events' through next term – watch this space!

I remain truly appreciative of your support and kind comments through this term. Challenging times brings out the best in people and it has been a privilege to hear about and experience some amazing acts of kindness from the Stafford Manor High School community over the last few months. It is so important that we continue to work together over the next two weeks and follow all the guidance so we can keep each other safe and enjoy the Christmas holiday with our families. We are here if you have any questions or need any advice. Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher

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## What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period

## Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop one of these main symptoms you must self-isolate immediately and book a test. You can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

However, many people are displaying different symptoms and often children with COVID-19 can display different symptoms to adults. Staffordshire County Council are now asking residents to consider getting tested as a precaution if they have other symptoms such as:

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

More details on testing from the County Council can be found at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Coronavirus/Testing/Book-a-test.aspx>.

The national testing centres across the country have good availability, and can be booked through the NHS website. People booking a test through this website need to check the 'My council has asked me to get a test option'.

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## **How to stop COVID-19 spreading**

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

### **Further Information**

Further information is available at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

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