

Our ref: ljm/KDV/Correspondence

30 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Re. Year 8 and Year 9 Students

I want to first thank you for your support for the school in our decision to close to Year 8 and Year 9 at the start of this week. The decision had to be made late on Friday and as such I did not get the chance to communicate with you in more detail. I just wanted to take this opportunity to update you with where we are as a school and expand on the decision to teach Year 8 and 9 remotely from Monday to Wednesday of this week.

We recently seen a decline in the number of students testing positive which has been really pleasing and testament to all the work parents, students and staff are doing to minimise risk. We have however seen a rise in the number of staff having to self-isolate because family members have tested positive and a huge increase in the number of staff having to provide childcare when their own children have had their bubbles closed. In the last week, we have lost a large number of key members of the school leadership teams to self-isolation, childcare issues and seasonal illness.

Keeping children safe on a site of this size takes a high level of supervision and upon receiving news that we would be without another two senior leaders at the start of this week, we felt we could no longer safeguard all the students against harm to the level we expect. We selected Year 8 and Year 9 in part because these are our largest year groups but also because they are yet to begin studying towards formal qualifications. As a parent myself I also understand that younger children are sometimes less able to self-direct their learning, so we also wanted to reduce the pressure on families who need to work from home by keeping Year 7 in school.

As it stands we will have sufficient staffing levels to bring both year groups **back on Thursday 3 December**, but as you can appreciate the picture is ever changing. If we need to revisit this decision, I will get in touch and give you as much notice as possible. Again, thank you for your support and the positive messages you have sent through. I want to reassure you that this decision was made to ensure we could provide a safe education rather than because of any rise in cases within the school.

Yours sincerely



Ken Vernon
Head Teacher