

25th November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I find it a pleasure to write to you on such a sunny day with blue skies and a bit of a refreshing chill in the air.

Please allow me to provide you with several updates:

Car Park

Following our trial of opening the car park gates at the end of the day at 2:45pm, the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, have decided to continue these procedures for the foreseeable future. The reasons for this decision include:

- increased safety for pupils
- transport staff now have improved ability to position vehicles in a safer and more controlled way
- the school site is now more secure during the school day

We will continue to monitor the car park and make adjustments as necessary with the aim of ensuring our pupils are as safe as possible. We will also continue to keep governors updated and ensure that they are kept abreast of developments with regard to safeguarding and wellbeing.

Thank you to those who provided us with feedback.

Please continue to wear masks when in the car park or when anywhere on the school grounds, your cooperation with this request is very much appreciated.

Christmas Craft Fair

We will be holding our Christmas Craft Fair on Saturday, 27th November from 10:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.

There will only be approximately 4 staff in attendance, including myself, who are all fully vaccinated. Staff are not being asked to work at the fair and their attendance, as for families, pupils and members of the public, is voluntary. Pupils will not be selling items at the fair as they have done in the past. Individual crafters will run their own tables selling homemade items and they will be invited to wear masks, as will all those who attend on Saturday.

The event will be held in the new sports hall, removing the need for anyone to come into the main school buildings and the sports hall will be well ventilated during and fogged after the event concludes. On this occasion, we will not be offering refreshments, a Santa's grotto and activities such as face painting. I hope this clarifies any questions you may have about Saturday's event, however please feel free to contact the school office should you have any queries.

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Covid-19

During the past couple of weeks, we have seen a marked increase in the number of positive Covid tests for both staff and pupils. Unfortunately, we currently have 15 staff who have tested positive as well as 11 pupils. In addition, we have members of staff who are off work for other Covid related reasons, for example looking after a child at home who has tested positive or they may be awaiting a PCR result.

I recently took part in a meeting with other Kent Special School Heads and Marisa White, our Area Education Officer. I learned that there is a similar picture across the county, particularly in special and primary schools. In addition, recruitment is quite challenging in our area currently and agencies are not able to provide us with adequate cover as Covid is affecting agency staff as well. As a result, difficult decisions need to be taken in regard to class closures and some classes going onto rotas. These types of decisions are taken only as a last resort and with the safety of our pupils at the forefront of our minds. In addition, these decisions are taken in consultation with Kent County Council and with our Governing Body. Please bear with us while we do all we can to ensure school is a safe place for learning during these very challenging times.

I know that some parents are choosing to keep their children at home as a precautionary measure even though their child has not tested positive for Covid. I understand that these are also difficult decisions and that in these situations parents have the very best and most sincere intentions. We are pleased to be able to offer remote education via Seesaw and staff have uploaded numerous learning resources to help keep disruption to learning to a minimum.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further support.

Yours faithfully



Jill Palmer
Principal