

4th January 2022

Dear Families,

Welcome back; I hope you all managed to get some rest, family time and relaxation over the busy Christmas break. I want to now wish you all a very happy 2022 and a change in our fortunes this year.

I am writing to update you all regarding this term and the potential challenges we will face.

Firstly, I want to thank everyone who has wished us well and supported us through the challenging year so far. I cannot say this enough, 'Your support means the world to us and it helps us through the hardest of times.' We are having to make constant difficult decisions and we know that we cannot keep everyone happy all the time but knowing that we have your understanding and support cannot be underestimated.

Our biggest priority this term is as follows:

Keeping the Academy open whilst ensuring everyone is safe and well.

The DFE have made a very clear statement that schools will not be closing; they have said that schools will need to increase class sizes, using teaching assistants and supply staff to ensure that children are in school. As you all know this may mean that our usual teaching and learning plans may be disrupted this term to manage need. I want to make you aware that we may have to look at the following options if there are increasing staff shortages:

- Regular, day to day, events and structures may have to be cancelled at short notice, including after school clubs.
- There could be disruptions to the Academy timetable or planned events which impact on class sizes and routines.
- The main office is under increased pressure, and we may need more time to get back to enquiries; please be patient with us.
- In more extreme cases, working with Public Health Somerset, there is a possibility that some classes may have to go to online learning for a short period of time.

We are continuing to act as an Amber school (there are three levels Green, Amber and Red) and will continue with all the following additional routines:

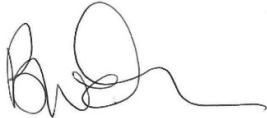
- That we follow and promote up to date guidance on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- That we continue to work with NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England acting on their advice.
- That we maintain cleaning regimes and focused cleaning of high use areas during the day.
- That we keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
- That we use appropriate PPE when dealing with a potential infection outbreak.

- Suspend assemblies until further notice.
- Ensure that lunch times continue to be staggered and year groups are given distinct seating areas.
- Ask that Staff wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas.
- Ask that any close contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19 identified by NHS Test and Trace book a PCR test and whilst awaiting test results, undertake a daily LFD test and only attend school if this is negative. The daily LFD testing is at the parent or guardian's discretion for primary age children.
- Continue to ask that parents/carers wear face coverings when on the Academy site.

In truth, it is hard to second guess what challenges we may face this term but what we do know is that our most valuable asset is our staff and if they are not available, we will struggle to offer a safe and effective service to our community. As you all know the current Omicron variant is very infectious, and though data is suggesting it is milder, we all know that people continue to feel unwell, are vulnerable and cannot come to work if they have a positive test.

I really do hope that we all see the back of COVID-19 in 2022 and that we can look towards letters from me about the amazing achievements from our fantastic children, staff and community. You are all amazing and cannot take for granted the wonderful work you do in your lives and to help support your children's education. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Walton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Walton