



Bedale High School
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Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, thank you so much for supporting school by sending your children back to us last week. It has been an incredibly positive start to term and there is a real buzz and positive energy in school at the moment. You will see various announcements in this week's newsletter, but I also need to cover a couple of aspects in more detail.

Coronavirus – School's Responses to Potential Symptoms

This is a huge challenge for schools right now. We are constantly being monitored to ensure that we are taking every necessary precaution to keep our community safe. The bottom line is that if a child develops one of the 3 key symptoms while in school, then we have to make arrangements to get them home and for them to stay at home until a negative test result has been received. You can imagine some of the issues with this (and some of you have already faced them):

- It might just be a symptom of a cold or bug that has nothing to do with Covid-19
- A child might be 'faking it' to get sent home
- How do we know if it is a 'new, persistent cough' or just a cough to do with something else like hay-fever or asthma?
- Tests are difficult to arrange now so my child may be off school for a longer time than needed

The list could go on. So, we are in a position where we follow the guidance we have been given to the best of our ability, and ultimately we play it safe. We are not doctors and we cannot carry out instant tests at school. If a child is 'coughing a lot for more than an hour', or it is clear that there have been '3 or more coughing episodes' in 24 hours – we will send them home to self-isolate until you get the test result. If a child has a temperature, or reports a sudden loss of taste/smell – the same applies. I am so sorry for the inconvenience this will inevitably cause, but it is the situation that all schools are in, and we are all responding in the same way. You may be worrying about conflicting messages about having to send your child to school, but also having to keep them off if they have symptoms – this is where our relationships with families will hopefully pay off as we work with you to stay in contact and make sensible decisions together.

To help with your responses and decision making, I have attached a parent response guide for different scenarios you may face. But as always, if in doubt, please speak to us and we will advise you the best we can.

Face Coverings

In school, the vast majority of children are dealing with the face coverings very sensibly. But I have had some isolated reports that students are not always wearing them on buses or in shops in Bedale. Please can I ask parents to emphasise the same messages that we are giving them in school around this issue? They must wear them on buses.

They must wear them in shops. We need them to understand that not doing so will only spread further anxiety to those around them and in our small community, they have a key role to play in modelling the right way to behave.

Event Planning for the Autumn Term

Firstly, I would like to share with you our plans around events this term. Like all schools, we are being advised to restrict visitors onto the site at all times in order to keep students, staff and our families as safe as possible. Clearly there are significant implications here for events like parent evenings, information evenings or any other event that involves a lot of people from outside our school bubbles coming onto the site. We are still in the process of planning the finer details of all this, but I can share the following overview which shows what format our alternatives to these events are likely to take:

- **24th September: Y9 GCSE Information Evening:**
Instead of the presentation in school, we can send the presentation and information to parents and potentially offer you the chance to join in a Teams Q/A session and/or individual follow up phone calls where needed. More information to follow from Mr Gill next week.
- **1st October: Y7 Settling In Evening:**
A letter sent home summarising our actions from the first few weeks, plus the opportunity to partake in a Teams Q/A session or planned phone call for those that require it.
- **8th October: Open Evening for parents of children in Year 5 and Year 6**
Please see advert attached to the newsletter for what we plan to offer – more details to follow in the coming days.
- **4th November: Y11 Parent Evening**
Written reports will replace this event - with very subject specific comments based on Attitude to Learning and Home Learning: essentially sharing what the teacher would have said at the Parent Evening. Follow up phone calls can be arranged where needed.
- **12th November: Y11 Information Evening**
Senior colleagues and key staff will produce a video presentation to share with parents, along with accompanying documentation that will be sent out.
- **17th November: Presentation Evening**
This is likely to take the format of a virtual Oscars type of event – but is still being planned in more detail.
- **19th November: Homework Support Evening**
Replace with a planned Teams Q/A session and sharing of what we have done so far to support, with the chance for parents to email, call or join in the virtual Q/A to provide their feedback.
- **25th November: Y9 Parent Evening**
Along similar lines to Y11 parent evening - see previous notes.

The problem we face, like all schools, is how do we maintain our positive profile with parents (both current and prospective) when we are essentially not able to engage with you on site and have those face to face conversations that can be so productive. In most cases, I think we can manage it through carefully planned written, phone-based or virtual communication. While I fully accept that this is not the way that we or our families would like to do things, I hope that you can understand why we are having to resort to such methods. As always, we are committed to trying to respond quickly to concerns and queries.

Finally, I must finish by acknowledging positives once more. I don't think that a community of young people have ever returned to school after a lengthy absence to face such wholesale change around routines and procedures – but they have coped magnificently. I am so proud of them, so thankful for our supportive parents and so lucky to have such a committed staff (and I mean all of them – not just teachers).

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Kelly