



7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Headteacher's Letter 2**

You may have picked up from the news that there is some concern nationally about the rates of absence among secondary school students. I thought that you would want to be brought up-to-date with the situation locally. It is, in any case, time that I reported to you on how arrangements for the new term have settled down.

Much of our everyday work this term could be described as normal. Our students move between rooms, lesson by lesson, meaning that facilities such as science labs and creative spaces are no longer restricted to a fortunate few. We have assemblies and full range of activities in PE. Educational visits and extracurricular activities are being provided once more. The weekly newsletter conveys a sense of recovery and activity.

Were you to observe the school throughout the working day, however, you would notice some remaining precautions. Good ventilation in the classrooms continues to be a high priority, although I have to say that the CO2 monitors we were promised have yet to materialise. Students moving between lessons are, wherever possible, being routed through the open air rather than along internal corridors.

I began this letter with a note about absence nationally and there is indeed another side to all of this. The normality for us would be in attendance rate of around 94%; last week it was running at about 89%. Put another way, more than one in 10 of our students was away.

Covid certainly plays a part in this; quite how big a part I could not precisely say. The responsibilities we have once testing has identified a local case are now very marginal. The current situation among Year 8 demonstrates this very starkly. My responsibility is simply to inform Public Health England (Worcestershire Local Outbreak Response Team) when there are five positive cases within a class or 10% within a group. As I have informed Year 8 parents in a separate letter, that threshold has been crossed in one class in Year 8. Public Health England has judged, however, that the disease has been passed on in the community and not here at the school. I am told that there is no need for any action on our part.

What I am doing however is reminding all of our families that Covid is still around; despite the many signs of normality, it has not gone away. Please be alert to any signs that your son or daughter could have become infected.

I wish you good health in the weeks ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Waters