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STOCKPORT SCHOOL

Headteacher Mr I. R. Irwin BA (Hons), MSc, NPQH

30th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would just like to send you a brief reminder of some important information for all students to be aware of. Please could I ask that you discuss these issues with your child, and also ensure that they have the appropriate items, equipment and provision in school each day, and that they also consider their active engagement in the additional learning opportunities of independent remote learning and enrichment available to them.

Staff Inset Day – School Close to All Students – Friday 2nd October

Friday 2nd October, is a Staff Inset (training) day, which means that the school is closed on that day to all students. School will resume as normal again on Monday 5th October, and all students should be on-site for 8.30am for an 8.40am start of the school day.

The first half of the Autumn term is due to end on Friday 23rd October at 3.00pm, with a one week half term break before all students return for the start of the second half of the Autumn term on Monday 2nd November.

School Jumpers and Additional Base Layers

Students are reminded of previous advice issued, that due to the need for us to have increased ventilation in relation to COVID control measures (windows open etc.), to wear under layers such as vests or plain white T shirts under their school uniform, as well as being strongly advised to purchase and wear the optional School jumper underneath their school blazer, in order to ensure that they remain warm enough during the autumn and winter months. Coats should not be worn inside classrooms or the school buildings.

Outdoor Coats

Outdoor coats are also an important addition to the full school uniform, and all students are strongly advised to have a good warm, and if possible, waterproof coat (not hooded top or tracksuit which are not permitted), to wear, when outside, over their school blazer. This is particular important, given the fact that all students are currently required to go outside of the school buildings at break and lunchtime (unless it is extreme wet weather).

Basic Equipment

In terms of equipment, it is also essential that each child continues to bring in their own basic school equipment (pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, calculator, subject materials and books etc.), as we cannot for hygiene reasons allow sharing of equipment whilst in school. Please can you ensure that your child has all of the necessary equipment on their person each day.

Face Coverings on Indoor School Corridors

As a result of the increased localised government COVID restrictions imposed upon us last week, all students and adults on the school premises are now required to wear a face covering when moving around school on indoor corridors. I would therefore appreciate it, if you could discuss this with your child, and advise and remind them that they should now bring with them and wear a face covering when moving internally across the school at lesson changeover.

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Despite this new government expectation, some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings under government law. For example people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, anxiety or disability, or if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate. Teachers and other staff will generally remind students of the new temporary expectation for them to put on a face covering at the end of each lesson before they are due to move along a corridor at lesson changeover, but will also be sensitive to individual needs and anxieties. The government also stress that no-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

In-keeping with the main government guidance on this issue, we do not expect students to wear a face covering whilst in lesson, as protective control measures in classrooms reduce the risks and the wearing of face coverings may inhibit effective communication and the quality of teaching and learning activity. Therefore, unless an individual student has an underlying medical condition which makes them clinically vulnerable to coronavirus, or lives with a family member whom is clinically vulnerable, and therefore for those specific additional medical reasons, wishes to wear a face covering in lessons as well as in corridors and communal areas, students should not wear face coverings whilst in classrooms. Should your child fall under these criteria, and they wish to wear a face covering in lessons as an exceptional circumstance, to provide additional self-reassurance and protection for themselves or an immediate household member, then we would ask that you contact your child's Pastoral Manager to confirm. The Pastoral Manager will then issue your child with a pass to confirm with their teachers that the wearing of a face covering in lesson has been requested under medical grounds and has been approved.

We also do not expect students to wear a face covering when outside of the school buildings or when entering the dining halls to eat their lunch, as those spaces are large enough for social distancing to be applied with students remaining in their carefully controlled Year group 'bubbles'. This is the same for Year group assemblies, where the use of a large space for a short period of time, in which alphabetical, single line, forward facing seating arrangements are in place to help control and track potential transmission. As with the previous point regarding lessons however, should an individual student wish to wear a face covering in one of these environments due to personal reasons, then that is of course permissible.

In terms of school policy, face coverings worn in school, must be a plain face covering without any branding, imagery or wording, appropriate for a school environment. You and your child must also take full responsibility for their provision, and for their safe and appropriate usage. The government state that it is vital that face coverings are worn correctly, including how they are put on, removed, stored and disposed of in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. Safe wearing of face coverings requires the cleaning or the sanitising of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on – and the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully. Where face coverings require disposal, a student must take the important responsibility of doing so by placing it themselves into a bin to avoid contact with others.

Enrichment

In terms of additional support, enrichment, and extra-curricular activity, it has been brilliant to see so many of our students from all Year groups, taking the opportunity to get involved with our new extensive Enrichment Programme.

Student involvement in enrichment and extra-curricular activities has been proven to broaden opportunity for learning and skill development, and enhance confidence, enjoyment and personal growth. With lessons now finishing at the earlier time of 3.00pm on a Monday-Wednesday, it allows all students to easily access the extensive array of additional Enrichment programme activities and clubs, which begin at 3.05pm. In addition to all of the other activities on offer for all Year groups, our GCSE students in Years 10 & 11 now have the opportunity of attending a different subject 'Study Support' session each afternoon on a Monday to Wednesday rotating across the fortnightly timetable. Six different subjects spread across six different afternoons (Monday – Wednesday 3.05pm – 3.50pm).

If your child has not yet engaged with the programme or attended an enrichment session, then I would very much encourage them to do so as soon as possible. Details of the Autumn Term Enrichment Programme are attached, and are also available on the Students and Parents sections of our school website www.stockportschool.net

Independent Remote Learning

During the lockdown period, teaching and learning had to continue remotely in order to keep everyone safe. In that period, our students and staff all developed greater confidence and experience of how to access and use our remote learning systems

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effectively. Now that we have returned to school, it is expected that all subject departments continue to set regular independent home learning tasks on our online Firefly system for students to complete (usually weekly). It is important and a school expectation, especially given the time lost this year during lockdown, that all students get into the habit and routine of completing their independent learning at home.

In the unfortunate event, that a student, group of students, 'bubble' or in a worst case scenario, the school, need to work from home for a period of time due to necessary self-isolation, quarantine, or government imposed lockdown, then our teaching and learning provision will move across immediately to online remote learning via Firefly (linking to other online resources such as Microsoft Teams, Hegarty, Century, Memrise, GCSE-POD, etc.) It is essential therefore, that all students and their parents/carers know and have written down at home, their passwords to access Firefly, Hegarty, Century, and other online resources. It is also important where possible, that students have home access to an internet enabled device such as a tablet, laptop, PC, or mobile phone, and we would encourage given the unusual circumstances that we all find ourselves in at present, due to the pandemic, that you look as an educational investment, to purchase or obtain one of these devices for home use. If you have particular difficulty in doing this, then we would ask that you contact us now for support and advice. Please contact Miss Holt, Assistant Headteacher, at r.holt@stockport.stockport.sch.uk if you require support in accessing remote independent learning.

In support of remote independent learning, we will also be issuing in paper format, short half termly subject booklets for each child, which will include summary topic materials of what is due to be taught in school during the half term, including links and references to further learning, as well as activities, questions and challenges that students can complete at home should they be required to do so due to necessary self-isolation, quarantine, or lockdown. When students receive these, they should store them safely at home, for if and when they may be required.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr I. R. Irwin
Headteacher

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