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**Head of School: Joan Wright**

 8th September 2020

Dear parent/carer

It has been great to see all our pupils and students return to school, including meeting those new to the schools. The pupils and students have taken to the new ways of working extremely well and we can see how hard they are trying to respect the new rules we have put in place. So far our risk assessments and preparations appear to be working well but we know what we are providing is limited compared to this time last year. Despite this the staff are working extremely hard to make lessons as interesting and engaging as possible and they have put a focus on the well-being of their class. Well-being, mentally and physically, is a priority for the school curriculum this year.

We will face many challenges in the coming months. Working in class bubbles, limits the risk to our pupils and staff but it is not going to be sustainable. Not least because when staff may be absent we may have no option but to compromise the bubbles and put different staff in. It is something we will be constantly reviewing.

One of our biggest challenges at the moment is pupils and students either coming into school unwell or coming down unwell during the school day. At this time of year, it is not uncommon to see a flurry of bugs and colds however these are not normal times. We have to work to the government guidance and therefore we are required to react to any child showing symptoms which may or may not be Covid Related. These symptoms are a high temperature, or a persistent cough, or the loss of the sense of taste or smell. The symptom of a persistent cough is the most challenging. Many children and adults have coughs at this time of year and many of our pupils have medical conditions which mean they cough. However, we are not medical professionals and therefore we can only work on the side of caution.

Where a child displays what we think might be described as a persistent cough, we are quarantining that child, phoning home and in the first instance asking that the parent contacts 119 to ask for advice with regards to a test. Even if the advice at that time is they do not need a test, should the child continue to cough the following day, we will ask that the child is collected from school and they are taken for a test. Only when a negative result is returned can the child return to school.

In some cases, we may not ask the parent to phone 119 first. If the symptom is clear such as a cough that is clearly persistent or a high temperature we may simply ask that the child is collected and taken for a test immediately.

We appreciate the disruption and upset this can cause to the young person and to families but these are the difficult times we are working in. We ask that if your child has any cold like symptoms, such as a cough or a raised temperature that you keep them at home and phone 119 for advice.

We wouldn’t normally expect a child who is not well to be in school but we know that sometimes with a mild illness any of us might be tempted to send our child to school and see how they get on. We ask that in these circumstances parents err on the side of caution and keep the child at home.

This simple step will help us do the best for the children in school each day. It will help us keep the bubbles intact and ultimately it will mean the school will be more likely to remain open to more pupils for a longer period of time.

Once again I want to thank you for your support.

Kind regards

Christopher Best

Executive Head for Springfield and The Meadows