



23 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

General update – Covid-19 including small changes to building usage, Year 11 mock examination arrangements, Sixth Form open evening and prospectus, IT/building works over half term, individual student photos after half term

As half term begins for our youngsters, I hope my final letter of this half term finds you well. This first half term of the academic year has been a foray into the unknown, an exploration of new ways of working and a time to learn a plenty. By the end of this letter, I hope you feel that we have met your expectations.

Covid-19 including small changes to building usage

As I write, the infection rate in North Kesteven has risen yet again, as has the national average. When I last wrote to you, there were 90 cases per 100,000 people. It now stands at 107 cases. The national average is 117, which has also risen dramatically. What is more concerning is the infection rate in Lincoln itself. This now stands at 178 cases per 100,000, well above even national average.

You may have heard this week on the radio some suggestions that Lincolnshire may be headed for Tier 2 restrictions by the end of November. This clearly remains a distinct possibility given the current data and we have to respond accordingly at the Academy. In addition, you may have also heard speculation over the past few weeks with regard to the idea of 'circuit breaks' where a short national lockdown would be imposed on the advice of SAGE. The government have not followed the first two suggested time frames for implementation of this with the third potential window being at the end of November. Given the current landscape and data set, I intend to make some small changes to our calendar in case we face such an eventuality, particularly with regard to Year 11 mock examinations (please see below).

Please could I ask parents to continue to keep us informed of any positive coronavirus cases during the break so that we can continue to provide information to any student who needs to self-isolate.

Should your child test positive, we ask that you notify us by contacting us via email on the usual email address COVID@srpa.co.uk.

It is important that we have this information so that we can contact staff to ascertain any close contacts within the class room. In addition to this we ask that, when you notify us of the names of any close contacts, your child has had 48 hours prior to the first symptoms during times such as break, lunch and out of the Academy.

Please see the link to government guidance on close contact:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

I have decided to make some small changes to the way we use our building in light of lessons learned this half term. This only affects Years 8, 9 and the sixth form.

From 2 November, two forms in Year 8 (forms SNH and SJO) and subsequent teaching sets will relocate to larger rooms on the top floor of the three storey block to avoid the need to use smaller rooms for larger classes. This will mean that the Year 8 bubble will occupy the middle and top floor of this block. This is a small change but is safer and more efficient moving forwards.

Some groups in Year 9 will change rooms within their bubble in order to ensure that they are better matched to a room of a suitable size for their group. No other changes are needed. This will be reflected in updated timetables.

The sixth form bubble will move downstairs to the bottom of the three storey block on the right hand side. This area is being decorated over half term. No other services will be affected. This is simply to ensure greater convenience for the sixth form so they have all their services on the ground floor, including closer access to toilets, their own study and common room facilities and to the Head of Sixth Form.

If any parents have any concerns at all, please contact us at the Academy using the email address COVID@srpa.co.uk. This will make it directly to me where I will be able to help and will do my best to prioritise your concern.

Year 11 mock examinations arrangements

Given the current local Covid-19 infection data, I have taken the difficult decision to move the Year 11 mock examinations to begin a week earlier. I have not taken this decision lightly. My rationale is simple: if you remember back to March, Covid crept up on us and forced a lockdown which began during our second mock examination window and did not allow us to complete all papers. You will also be aware of the emphasis placed on mock examinations as a valid data set as late as August in setting final examination grades. This was a significant challenge for all schools and it was no different at SRPA. Given the uncertainty around future infections, I feel it is necessary to set robust covid-secure examination arrangements and to ensure that we fulfil our obligations to our students to complete this examination window prior to any potential national action.



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In case any of you think I know more than you do, I assure you that I do not. However, without the power of foresight, I see this as a good chance to 'futureproof' at least some data for our youngsters just in case decisions are taken out of my hands.

You can expect me to fight with everything I have to ensure that my Year 11 students get exactly what they deserve. This is a small change which may well allow me more chance to do that, just in case. Full support will be given prior to the examinations, as you would expect, and the order and timetabling of examinations will not change, except to move them a week earlier. Finally, I will be instructing all of my Department Heads and Faculty Leads to ensure that marking of examinations is conducted sensitively and Mrs Spoor will work with Mr Ward to ensure that this is achieved.

Mr Ward will be in touch separately in relation to arrangements for examinations and provisional arrangements for results next summer.

Sixth Form open evening and prospectus

Yesterday, our current Year 11 students were addressed live in registration via Microsoft Teams and received the sixth form prospectus and application form for entry to Year 12 next September. Please take the time to consider this over the half term.

During the first week back, Mr Griffiths and I will be available on the evening of 4 November to offer a live Q&A for parents and students who may be considering post 16 study. This is in addition to the Frog microsite I mentioned in my update letter last week that will be made available for you during the week beginning 2 November in order to support your decision making. Mr Griffiths will be in touch separately about this. We look forward to seeing you there.

Should you have any queries or questions, please contact Mr Griffiths at jgriffiths@srpa.co.uk.

IT/building works over half term

In the summer holidays I had to postpone some building and IT works in order to ensure that we opened successfully in September to all year groups after the national lockdown. As a consequence, this work will be conducted during the coming half term.

On Monday 26 October, we will be completing a 'graceful shutdown' and reboot of our IT servers after some work to improve our infrastructure. Consequently, we will have no IT access for a few hours during the day. Should you contact us via email over the weekend or on Monday it will inevitably take us a little longer to pick this up as this work is vital.

In addition, as our roofing project draws to a close, we are embarking on a large project to upgrade our electrical infrastructure in the main building, including emergency lighting and main circuit boards. As a result, there will be intermittent and often lengthy periods without electricity during the middle of next week and especially between Tuesday and Thursday. Again, it may take us longer to be in touch as a consequence. I apologise for the potential



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inconvenience this may cause. In usual times this work is perfect for the summer holidays but, as we worked through this year, this has not been possible.

Individual student photos after half term

On the first day back, we will be visited by our school photographers in order to capture individual student photos. This was postponed from early September in order to ensure Covid security measures. A timetable is in place for the day and you will receive your child's proof in due course thereafter.

After an incredibly long half term, I must end by thanking our youngsters for their fortitude and good humour during the past few weeks. We have continued to tweak our practice for maximum safety, often at short notice, and the overwhelming majority have been marvellous. Thank you. My staff team have also been a beacon of light in darker times over the past couple of months. They deserve a break to rest and recharge. I am grateful to them for their hard work, tireless commitment to our youngsters and their endless smiles as we have ploughed through the many challenges since September.

As I sign off, I hope you have a wonderful half term with your children. In the words of Nelson Mandela, "History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children."

I hope you feel that we leave a footprint.

I will write again after half term.

Yours faithfully



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