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Kelmscott School

"Putting Learning First"

11th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. The penultimate letter of the school term with the Christmas holidays now very close.

A Covid-19 update for you as always. Following government advice **Thursday 17th December is now our last day of the term.** Friday 18th December will be an INSET day for staff. By finishing on Thursday, we will avoid staff having to track and trace on Christmas Day itself as well as reducing the risk of staff and students being identified as a close contact if there were to be a positive COVID case.

Students will be dismissed at their normal times to begin their holiday:

- 14:30 for Year 7
- 14:40 for Years 8 and 9
- 14:45 for Year 10
- 14:50 for Year 11.

While I appreciate the impact this might have on any childcare arrangements, as always safeguarding students and staff is the priority. With the current challenges that North London is facing this is the safest way for colleagues, students and their families to begin their holiday.

At the time of writing this letter, we have had two positive cases this week. One in Year 7 and one in Year 11. It is always very upsetting to deal with these cases and to send students home, away from our school, to self-isolate. It has come to our attention this week that some students have now had two periods of self-isolation this term and one student in Year 11 has had three periods of self-isolation. This is very upsetting to discover but we are doing all we can to support those students.

I spoke to the Year 11 students who were asked to self-isolate this week personally. Amongst other things, I shared with them a belief I have that students who are currently dealing with the challenges of Covid-19 will have increased levels of resilience and be much better equipped to work independently. Hopefully there may be some good that comes out of the bad in the months and years to come.

During the Christmas holidays, we would like families to continue to update us if students do test positive for Covid-19. In that instance we would like families to email us on the info@kelmscott.waltham.sch.uk with the following information;

- 1.) Name and tutor group
- 2.) Date of test
- 3.) Date symptoms started
- 4.) What symptoms students are experiencing
- 5.) Confirmation of the email/text from Public Health England of the positive result

We have been asked by the government to continue our track and trace system into the first week of the school holiday. If there are any positive cases amongst staff or students from Friday 18th

December until Thursday 24th December and symptoms began on Saturday the 19th of December or earlier, we will be identifying close contacts to the positive student. Close contacts will be contacted and advised to self-isolate for 14 days from the day the symptoms started. Clearly we are hoping that we won't have any cases during this time but I think it is important to be transparent about this with you.

We have been asked by Waltham Forest to share some advice for the holiday period;

- * Foreign travel is discouraged
- * Please stick to the three bubble rule
- * Please adhere to tier restrictions
- * Please report positive tests
- * Please do not return to school on Tuesday, the 5th of January if symptomatic

Finally, on Covid-19, I would like to apologise for the hic up in our reporting systems for positive cases of Covid-19. There was a system error this week that led to families receiving the wrong message. The message asked students to self-isolate, when actually the message for those families was simply alerting them to a positive test within the school with no action needed on the families' part. This was quickly corrected so everyone was in the picture but I am sorry for the upset and distress this may have caused. We have rectified the issue and are confident it won't be repeated.

The Borough have issued us with vouchers for those families who qualify for free school meals (FSM), for over the Christmas period. We will be disseminating these to families before we break up for the holidays. We will be on hand next week to deal with any questions or queries families may have about this.

We suspect there may be a number of families, not on our usual radar, who may be struggling but are soldiering on and not claiming anything or asking for support through the usual channels, including not claiming FSM. Our Kelmscott Food Bank is here to help you, please reach out on email to foodbank@kelmscott.waltham.sch.uk - we are here to support you. We have a great range of non-perishables including, tinned goods, dry goods such as pasta as well as beauty products such as soap and shampoo. We never share information about who has taken advantage of this offer, it is completely confidential and very discrete.

Last week was supposed to be our Evening of Excellence for last year's Year 11, the Class of 2020. As we were unable to have an event in person we have organised a virtual event for those students and families. We normally invite students from Years 10 and 11 to this event as well, to show them what success looks like and to give them something to aim for. If you are interested in viewing this virtual event, please go to our school Twitter account where you will find more information.

We continue to have the very highest standards and expectations of our students in all aspects of their school life. One such important area is punctuality where we have an unapologetically tough stance for students; if they are late, they have a 45-minute detention that afternoon. Our lates are amongst the lowest in the borough as a result of this tough stance. I appreciate traffic can be challenging in Waltham Forest but I thank you for your continued support here. Where possible students could should consider walking or cycling to school if they live in relatively close proximity to the school.

Thursday the 17th of December will be a non-uniform day, always popular with the students. Students will be required to pay £2 on the day, their contribution will be split two ways. The first beneficiary will be Blood Cancer UK in honour of Hassan Ahmad, our former student, who tragically passed away from Leukaemia just two years ago. He continues to be in our thoughts and prayers. The other half of the money raised will go to the Kelmscott Community Food Bank.

The new school term will begin at the usual time on Tuesday, the 5th of January 2021. Monday the 4th is a staff training day. I will write again this time next week as we conclude the school term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Jones', written in a cursive style.

Mr Sam Jones
Headteacher