

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you and your families had a restful half-term. We've really noticed the change of temperature in the mornings and have already experienced a number of cold starts and darker evenings this week.

Students will need to have a coat so they can keep dry and warm, both on the way into school, as well as moving around our vast campus.

Our sports hall is out of action next week as our Year 11s start their first set of mock examinations (the second set are in February). We wish them well and know the exam practise will put them in good stead for the future. Year 11 families will receive separate communications with exams information.

This week saw the start of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, with the main day of celebration on Thursday 4 November. We wish all our families a Diwali that brings happiness prosperity and joy to you and all your family.

INSETs

We have an INSET on 15 November; our last two INSETs have covered aspects of educational research as well as instructional coaching. The main focus of the INSET on the 15th will be on emotion coaching which we are developing as a whole school objective.

Vacancies

We currently have several support staff vacancies, including positions within our ICT department, as well as our pastoral teams and support department. All our vacancies are advertised on the [vacancies page](#) of the school website and on TES. If you know anyone who may be interested in these posts, please let them know.

Carol Service Update

The BIG choir have been busy practising for the Carol Service. Unfortunately, due to restrictions in place at St Johns Church we must limit the numbers in the Church. Sadly this means we unable to extend the invitation to attend the Carol Service to the whole Stringer Community this year. The families of performers will be able to book tickets for the live event and for those who are unable to attend we will record the Carol Service so you can watch it online. Details on how to access the recordings will be on the SLG so you will be able to enjoy it from home and share with your extended families.

Movember

For many years now, Stringer staff have supported the Movember campaign, raising money for men's health. This year the focus is on prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health and suicide prevention. Can we persuade you in joining the Maths staff in growing a Mo? No shaving above the top lip for the entire month of November! If so, please support the Stringer Mo's team, using the link below.

<https://movember.com/t/stringer-mo-s?mc=1>

Covid

The Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, has written an open letter to parents and carers about the vaccine for children aged 12 to 15 You can read it here by following this link:

[Letter to Parents and Carers from the Education Secretary](#)

We thought it might be useful to remind you of the guidance regarding Covid-19 procedures, testing and other guidance. We thank you for your continued support in ensuring our cases

remain low and we continue to make the school as safe as possible on a daily basis, free from the virus.

SYMPTOMATIC

As we enter the flu season, please remember that Covid symptoms require you to seek a PCR test. Please arrange a PCR test for your child as soon as possible if they have any of these symptoms, even if mild:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

The symptomatic person must isolate until you have the results from the PCR test. Further information regarding this guidance can be found here.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/main-symptoms/>

PCR tests are free via the following link <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

ASYMPTOMATIC

Lateral flow tests are only to be used for **asymptomatic** testing and are not intended for use in testing anyone with symptoms. If positive on lateral flow:

- book confirmatory PCR test (with NHS)
- isolate until test result known

If positive on PCR

- if confirmed positive on PCR, 10-day isolation begins from first day of symptoms/or positive lateral flow, whichever was sooner. Isolation ends at midnight on the 10th day.
- please inform the school (attendance through study bugs) and then inform NHS Track and Trace.
- the student should be prepared to provide the school with a list of close contacts. NHS Track and Trace are supposed to do this but, in our experience, this has not been overly effective or accurate so we are being on the front-foot about this and will contact close-contacts ourselves.
- family members and close contacts that remain asymptomatic do NOT have to isolate but should seek a PCR test as soon as possible.
- if any symptoms appear, then please do isolate, and get PCR to confirm.

A negative lateral flow test result does not replace the need for a PCR test in a symptomatic person, and we will not be accepting this as proof of not having Covid-19.

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/test-results/positive-test-result>

Energy Bills

The Local Authority has asked us to share a factsheet with families who may be worried about the cost of their energy bills. The information includes:

- Tips to save energy
- Information about discounts and grants
- Where to go for extra help
- How to avoid debt

[Family Service Directory | Get help and advice with your energy bills \(familyinfobrighton.org.uk\)](https://familyinfobrighton.org.uk)

Root Word of the Week – Dem: people (Greek root word) Demographic; Democracy
Epidemic

Key Dates

- Monday 15 November – INSET school closed to students
- Thursday 25 November – Year 10 Parents' Evening

Key Dates 2021/2022 are on our website: https://public.dorothy-stringer.co.uk/ds/pages/key_dates.aspx

Take care and stay safe.

Matt Hillier