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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



10th September 2021

Dear Parent,

I'd like to thank you, alongside your amazing children and the fantastic staff at RAA, for your very warm welcome to David Blow and to me as your interim Headteacher team. This is a wonderful school community and it's very frustrating that my first 'missive' as Head has to focus on COVID! Of course, that has been the lot of Headteachers over the last eighteen months and, at this point in time, it's really pleasing that learning, co-curricular and most of the other great things can continue.

That said, we are in a position where we are going to have to introduce some preventative measures as we seek to limit the spread of COVID and the linked potential disruption to school life. I've been able to witness first-hand the depth and quality of the planning and implementation of actions to reduce the risks from COVID. Our job over the coming months will be to balance delivering the vitally important educational elements in the way we want, with our continuing public health duty.

In terms of the current situation, we have had a cluster of positive cases amongst Year 7 pupils who are boarders in Rank Weston. There does not appear to have been any spread to Year 7 flexi boarding pupils or to other Year Groups or Houses, though we remain very vigilant. There are a number of other cases amongst staff and pupils but these, as far as we can tell, have not led to spreading amongst a group of people. As we have had a cluster, we have contacted Public Health England (PHE) and they have advised we take a number of actions to seek to limit the risk of COVID spreading more widely. We expect these measures to be implemented for a limited period of time, and we will review them with PHE on, at least, a fortnightly basis.

Consequently, with immediate effect, the following additional measures will be introduced:

- Junior flexi boarding pupils will not go into the Rank Weston Boarding House before or after school. There will be an Extended Day Programme (EDP) in place in the school building for those not involved in co-curricular activities (more details on this will follow from Mr Greenwood).
- Face coverings to be worn by all Senior pupils, Staff and Visitors (unless exempt) in indoor communal areas including corridors.
- Assemblies and large group meetings will happen on Microsoft Teams.
- The Junior School Welcome (11/09/21) and the Open Morning (18/09/21) have been postponed.
- Other large indoor events will need to be postponed or moved online.
- Visitors inside school buildings are restricted to essential visits only, please contact staff by phone or email in the first instance.

We would strongly encourage you to support your child in taking a lateral flow test today (PHE have advised that this is also recommended for our Junior pupils). Please report any positive tests to covidcase@gatton-park.org.uk as well as reporting to the NHS.

Public Health England have also asked us to encourage all those who are eligible (16 years+) to get their COVID vaccine.

To help explain the decisions that we have taken I've recorded a short video which outlines this and the other measures that are in place, and enables a little more reflection from me than I can squeeze into a letter. Please click [HERE](#) to see the video version. If you are interested to find out more about the "Upstanders" message that we have introduced to the pupils this term, we have also recorded this morning's KS4 and KS5 assembly (link [HERE](#)).

Thank you for all of your support, your patience and encouragement. I'm looking forward to the start of the co-curricular programme next week as we look to build a very successful academic year, irrespective of the challenges that the pandemic will bring.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Malley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

James Malley
Headteacher