

4 November 2020

Dear parents and carers

National Lockdown

As we prepare to enter the national lockdown tomorrow (Thursday 5 November), I wanted to clarify both some changes to our COVID Risk Assessment, and also to confirm arrangements for mock exams (PPEs) for Years 11 and 13. We are waiting for more updates from the government today, if there are any additional changes we will, of course, let you know.

Face Coverings

Whilst we are in the latest lockdown, the wearing of face coverings inside school buildings (with the exception of classrooms and offices) will be compulsory for all staff, students and visitors to the school.

Any members of the school community who are unable, for medical reasons, to wear a mask should contact school@wealdgs.org, attaching the evidence of medical exemption, in order for us to issue a lanyard to be worn in school. Whilst not wishing to highlight underlying health concerns, we want it to be quick and easy for staff and students to identify that members of the community who are not wearing a mask are doing so for legitimate reasons, enabling us all to be more supportive of each other.

We will review our position on face coverings once the national lockdown has ended and will inform all members of the community accordingly.

Attendance at School

The Department for Education (DfE) have made it clear that the expectation is for all students to attend school throughout the national lockdown. We recognise, however, that there may be some members of our student community who have been advised by their own doctors not to attend school at this time. If this applies to your child, please contact school@wealdgs.org, attaching either the NHS letter that has been sent to your household, or a letter from your GP/consultant and we will make the necessary arrangements for the live online learning to be made available.

In the Event of Confirmed COVID Cases in School

Should we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the school community, it may be necessary to ask some students to leave the school site and remain at home for two weeks.

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Track and Trace or COVID Symptoms

If your child has been asked to isolate for two weeks as a result of coming into contact with a confirmed case, or they or a member of your household develop symptoms, please do not come into school. Contact our attendance office attendance@wealdgs.org and we will arrange access to the online live learning.

Year 11 and 13 Mock Exams (PPEs)

Those of you with children in Year 11 or 13 will be watching with interest the debate in relation to public exams taking place in the summer term. As far as we are aware, at this stage all public examinations will be taking place, but as we saw last year the situation could change depending on the national picture moving forwards. Therefore, it is vital that students are mindful of the importance of their mock exams (PPEs) this year. Year 13 will be sitting PPEs in January, with Year 11 sitting their PPEs later in the spring term. Alongside this, curriculum staff will be setting regular assessed classwork to identify any areas of support that are needed this year.

Staff are on hand to offer support and guidance when needed, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you or your child have any concerns.

Access to IT Equipment at Home

Thank you for the responses we had to the IT survey, we have been able to make available IT equipment to all students who did not have access at home. This means we are able to move to online live lessons for any students who need them.

Peripatetic Music Lessons

Unfortunately, as we enter the new national lockdown we will need again to arrange music lessons online rather than face to face. We appreciate this will be disappointing to those students who participate in these lessons, and we hope to be able to re-instate them once the lockdown has ended. Again, we will be in contact once the national lockdown has ended and will inform you accordingly.

Mental Health

We understand that going back into lockdown will be distressing for many members of our school community and we would like to confirm that our school counsellors will be on hand in school, continuing to support students in need, as will our amazing pastoral team, Student Services, heads of year, assistants to the heads of year and form tutors. Our 'virtual' doors are always open, contact can be made at any time by email.

If you have any questions or concerns, do please contact gdoorrian@wealdgs.org. In the meantime, thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Best wishes and take care

Mrs E Bone
Headteacher