

Our Ref: PRC/EMH

09 November 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you are all keeping well with the latest challenge that 2020 is throwing at us. This second Lockdown seems somewhat different to the first, with schools remaining open. We are delighted that we can continue with on-site education, albeit with increased restrictions to keep everyone as safe as possible. Attendance in all year groups for last half term was over 90%, which shows how much students want to be in school and is well above the secondary school national average for last half term. The school feels very vibrant and purposeful at the minute and once again I continue to thank the vast majority of students for the maturity they have shown in adhering to the rules. I would really appreciate parental support on the following:

1. Encouraging your child not to loiter around Regent Centre at the end of the day; this is even more important over the next few weeks. Other than those students waiting for buses, the staggered finishes allow for most students to make their way home quickly before the next year group leave. School staff have voluntarily started going up to Regent Centre again but my concern is they are putting themselves at increased risk if students are hanging around in large groups unnecessarily.
2. Government guidelines have changed; face coverings are now mandatory in communal areas and at the change of lessons. We had this measure in place from September anyway but in particular we are finding we have to remind a small minority of our Sixth Form students (particularly in the common room) more often than we should need to.

We were really pleased with our Covid procedures last half term and we are constantly adapting as new guidance is released. Considering Newcastle was the fourth worst city for virus transmission at one point, to have the handful of cases we had in each year group was the best we could have hoped for. We understand it can be frustrating for those close contacts needing to self-isolate but we follow advice from Public Health Newcastle and hope your son/daughter is kept busy with online work. We encourage

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them to contact their teacher or pastoral team if they have difficulties during their self-isolation period.

As you can imagine, staffing levels are also varied and on average 5% of teaching staff were absent each day last half term. For safe operation we need to monitor this very carefully and I'm well aware of other schools sending home full year groups due to severely depleted staffing levels. Whilst I hope we don't need to do this, I would rather be transparent with you and say that this could happen if we were to lose too many staff due to Covid.

Finally, we look forward to an action packed half term including GCSE Drama performances, Senior Maths Challenge, Autumn exam season, various subject internal verification and moderation, virtual careers convention, Remembrance Day virtual assemblies, Year 11 mock revision classes, Main School Review Days, Year 11 & Year 13 catch up sessions, Year 11 telephone parents evening appointments (more info shortly) etc etc!

We have made the decision that all the wonderful things we do in the run up to Christmas will not be cancelled either, just adapted. Plans are already in place to take the Senior Citizens Christmas party, usually held in school, to the care homes (safely, of course). We are also planning to continue to make our usual massive contribution to the food bank which we feel is more important than ever this year and arrangements are already in place so we can quarantine and handle donations safely. On top of this, plans are in place for virtual Christmas assemblies and much more! Real credit to the students and staff who are thinking out the box to make these things happen. It's times like this where you really appreciate the wonderful community we have here.

Have a great week.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Chahal', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

**Mr P Chahal**  
**Principal**