

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

24th September 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It was not my intention to produce a newsletter every week but so much has happened over the past seven days it feels right to be in touch once again and update you on our thinking and progress during these uncertain times.

COVID-19: The Changing Picture

You will all be aware of the significant increase in reported positive Covid-19 cases across the UK. On Monday, we heard a joint statement from the Chief Scientific and Medical Officers which painted a stark picture of where we could end up should no action be taken at this point. They underlined the importance of us all adhering to the public health advice (“Hands, Face, Space”), the imperative requirement for those showing symptoms and/or who are “contacts” to self-isolate and the need further restrict social contact in order to try and slow (and eventually, break) the chain of transmission. In response, we then heard the Prime Minister announce further national restrictions and a clear indication that these restrictions could possibly last throughout the autumn and

winter months: seasons during which respiratory viruses transmit more easily.

There is no question that here at school things are going well (although I always feel anxious about saying that!) and it’s clear that the measures we have put in place have been effective. However, this effectiveness could easily lead to a false sense of security and we could become complacent. As the number of cases increase nationally, so too does the risk and it is incumbent on us all to ensure that we follow all current guidance diligently and at all times. This is especially important for Day-Students and their families and those weekly boarders who still return home at weekends. I would ask all families to ensure that they diligently monitor

what students are doing, where they are going and that they restrict the number of contacts students have when they are not in school. I will be asking all staff to do the same. It is also vital that all families follow advice about isolation. Please do not send students back to school if they are unwell and if they are displaying any symptoms of Coronavirus please follow Government guidance.

I attach to this newsletter a letter to parents from Public Health England which outlines the circumstances in which individuals should seek a test and/or self-isolate.

Next week, I will be talking to all students about the changing picture and the need for us to increase our efforts.

NHS Covid-19 APP (for over 16s)

The Government has today (Thursday) launched their tracing app. We received details about how this might be used within school late on Wednesday evening and are still in the process of

formulating our position on its use (which is not mandatory). For full boarders, it will be of very limited use, but it may offer some reassurance to Day-Students and weekly boarders in the sixth form and staff.

However, there are also some potential pit-falls. We will digest the information over the coming days and publish our thoughts next week.

Food

A number of parents (and more than a number of students) have been concerned about the loss of a hot lunch. As I explained in last week's newsletter, we began term with a deliberately reduced offer while we assessed the

practicalities and logistics of managing food service. From today, we will be introducing hot "take-away" lunches which will also be supported with salad and sandwiches. There will be a new queuing system in house bubbles and we will

be monitoring and assessing the effectiveness (and safety) of the new process. It was never our intention for the simplified lunch offer to remain permanent.



In Other News ...

It would be easy to think that life is all "doom and gloom" at the moment! But I have to say I am delighted with the way in which the School is currently operating. Despite the circumstances, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere

around school and student behaviour has been exceptionally good (especially considering the restrictions we are currently living under). We have been enjoying some very fine concerts given by staff and students, academic work

is going well and life in houses seems to have settled into a happy routine. I have been impressed by the resilience of the Purcell community during these past three weeks.

Feedback

We are always happy to hear from you so do please get in touch to share your thoughts. During these uncertain times it is inevitable some of you will have concerns from time

to time and we are always pleased to help resolve these where we can. Like anyone, we also appreciate knowing when you are happy with how we are doing or how we have

managed a particular issue, so please don't be shy to let staff know. It means a tremendous amount to staff to know their work is appreciated especially during these testing times.

With all good wishes,

Paul Bambrough
Principal

