

Dear parents and carers,

Covid-19 Update

Well, there certainly seemed an air of inevitability that we would have our first positive confirmed case of either a student or member of staff before half term. I would like to thank everyone for their support and understanding. Our thoughts and well wishes go out to every family who is having to deal with the impact of the virus.

I thought, that it might be useful to everyone if I outlined the actions schools have to take when a positive case is reported as I know that the standard letters sent home (as I've received a few as a parent) are rather official and do little to allay any concerns or questions that you may have.

Of course, our priority has to be the welfare of staff and students. To this end, as soon as we know of a positive case, contact is made with Public Health England and a designated North Yorkshire Health official. Working with them, an internal track and trace system is implemented. To help us do this, we have a record of every single seating plan, for every single lesson. We also speak to the affected family and check who the student spent their journey to and from school with, break and lunchtime with and if anyone visited their house after school. Using this information allows us to identify what Public Health England classify as "close contacts."

It's important to realise that a "close contact" is not someone who is in the same room, or walked past someone on a corridor – so a teacher, handing a worksheet or exercise book to a student, is not a close contact. Similarly, two students on opposite sides of a classroom are not close contacts.

Once close contacts are identified, these students are isolated from their peers and have to self-isolate for up to 14 days. During the period of self-isolation students must not leave their homes, visit friends, attend sports or recreational activities; but (to their delight) as long as they remain well, they can continue to complete school work through google classrooms. If a student starts to develop any symptoms during their period of self-isolation they must get tested, and their family must also self-isolate. It is vital that they communicate this to school, so we can review our initial track and trace and identify any other students who may need to self-isolate.

We also undertake a deep clean of all areas where any person with a confirmed positive case may have been. This deep clean is completed on the day we become aware of the positive case. The deep clean is undertaken by an external company.

We also notify all parents/carers of any confirmed positive cases of staff and students, using the template letters provided by Public Health England.

Remember- the earlier we have information about any confirmed positive cases the quicker we can act. Please don't hesitate to inform us out of school hours by emailing admin@shs.starmat.uk

Year 11 Update

As indicated earlier this week, a new page on our website with details of our Year 11 Supporting Success plans goes live today. The page has video presentations from Senior Leaders and Curriculum Leaders to help parents, carers and students prepare for their forthcoming Pre-Public Exams (PPEs) and GCSEs. Since recording there has been a further update from the government in relation to this summer's examinations as the JCQ

has now published their provisional GCSE examination timetable which is available here:
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/June-2021-Amended-Provisional-Timetable.pdf>

According to the provisional timetable the first GCSE examination will be English Language Paper One on Wednesday 26th May, followed by Maths Paper One on Thursday 27th May.

According to the provisional timetable the final GCSE examination will take place on Friday 2nd July.

Please note, that this is a provisional timetable, and is subject to change.

As we now have this information we are in a position to make enquiries with venues in relation to Prom (of course this is subject to Covid-19 restrictions being changed). As soon as I have more information, I will communicate this to parents/carers and students.

Important Dates for Your Diary

Remember that next Friday is the final day of this half term. School will close at 3 p.m. for one week and students will return on Monday 2nd November.

Friday 27th November is a staff training day and school will be closed for students.

The autumn term ends on Friday 18th December and students return on Tuesday 5th January.

And finally...

Whatever the weather, or challenges we face, the one thing I can rely on is our wonderful students putting a smile on my face! Here's this week's Super Six Lucky Dip Winners doing just that: congratulations go to Molly Ralls, Oliver Cook, Joana Costa, Beatrice Cunningham, Rosie Thistlewood, Josh Smeaton, Jayden Selby and Jack Harrison.



I hope you all have a good weekend,

Miriam Oakley