

Dear Parents,

I thought that it would be helpful to get in touch as we are about to restart for the second half of term. Over the half term break, we have had about 50 students who have stayed with us, in order to avoid having to isolate on return from overseas. They have enjoyed a mixed programme of work time, sports, social time and activities as diverse as bake off and roller disco. They have done extremely well, especially as for some this means that they have not been home since the middle of August.

As you will be aware from the Newsletter update before half term, we are making a few minor changes to our operation from Monday. The key ones are as follows:

1. A return to full school uniform for senior pupils (Prep pupils should wear full uniform or games kit, on the days when they have PE or games)
2. A gradual reopening of the Coffee Shop for senior pupils

However, as Essex has been designated as being in Tier 2 (high alert), we are not reducing our other measures, and will continue to take temperatures on arrival; ensure increased cleaning regime; insist on frequent hand washing (or use of handgel); maintain distance where possible (especially for teachers); continue to operate in year groups as far as possible; strictly limit visitors on site and trips off site; and we will not be restarting inter-school sports fixtures. Please do reinforce the importance of these (and other) measures to your children, and also, it is important that families continue to follow the government guidance, to minimise the risk of an outbreak occurring at school.

Please can I also remind you that if anyone at home is symptomatic, they should be tested as soon as possible, and that other members of the household should isolate until a result is available. If any pupil is symptomatic, please keep them at home until a test can be done and follow the guidance in relation to the test outcome. If a boarder is symptomatic, we will test and isolate here at school if they are not able to get home.

Over half term, we have had a small number of positive results reported to us for current pupils. Because of the timing of these test results, no other pupils (or staff) have been affected, and the individuals concerned will return to school once their period of isolation is complete. It seems likely that, in the coming weeks we will have a number of positive tests within the school community, and we will only make contact with you about that when it has a direct impact (class, house or year group) with guidance for what to do as a result, in order to ensure that our communication is more targeted.

As you will be aware, the start date for the Spring Term is now Monday 11th January (Sunday 10th for boarders, with Staff INSET on Friday 8th). We will provide the opportunity for students who live overseas to isolate in school before the start of term (where necessary), but are looking for ways in which we might be able to shorten that time from the current 14 day period. We hope to be able to confirm the arrangements by 15th November.

The risk at school continues to be very low, and the environment is being managed to be as Covid safe as possible, while continuing to provide the best possible education. We very much look forward to seeing all of you back at Felsted in the coming days.

All best wishes,

Chris Townsend and Simon James