

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



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6 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

At the end of a rather busy first week back after half term, I'd like to thank you for your continued support. We have been pleased that attendance has remained high and pupils are continuing to respond well to the new measures in place. In amongst lots of national uncertainty, there is some reassurance that, in school at least, we are able to continue with a (near) normal routine.

Thank you for using the positivetest@ripley.lancs.sch.uk email to report positive tests over half term. This enabled us to respond quickly when we needed to. Please do use this out of hours if you need to inform us about a positive result.

Thank you also for giving us specific information about why your child is off school on the absence line - this helps us identify whether the absence is COVID-related or not.

Ofsted

We had a very positive visit from Ofsted on Tuesday this week. These visits are part of their research for the DFE into the impact on COVID-19 on schools and the effect the lockdown has had on our pupils' education. They were particularly keen to hear about our experience in the North West. It was good to be able to share the work we have done, how proud we are of our staff and pupils, but also to share with them the challenges the situation poses as well.

The inspectors thought the school and our grounds were very impressive and they wished they could have gone on a tour! They also spoke about how lovely it was to hear the children outside my office at break and lunch and to see them playing sport outside – a bit of normality in amongst everything.

There is no judgement or report, but a short factual letter will be published in due course.

New Guidance

As a result of the new lockdown period, the DFE has issued some further guidance for schools. I have summarised the main changes you need to be aware of below.

Clubs

After school clubs are not permitted to run from Monday onwards. This does not include revision sessions, homework clubs or detentions, which can all go ahead. We believe that various bodies are talking to the DFE to see whether we can be allowed to continue with co-curricular clubs which take into account our usual measures and which are taught by our staff straight after school. If we get any further news, I'll be sure to let you know. We desperately want these important activities to continue, but for now we will need to follow the guidance.

Believe.....

Principal Mrs C Walmsley
Chair of Governors Mrs J Garnett

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Visitors

We need to restrict visitors into school further. As a result, I am afraid that parents will not be able to come on site for meetings at the current time. We will make sure that meetings which need to happen can take place either by telephone or online.

Attendance

All pupils should continue to attend school as normal. The exception is children who fall into the 'extremely clinically vulnerable' category who need to stay at home. We have also been told that most children originally identified as extremely clinically vulnerable no longer need to follow shielding advice. You are advised to speak to your GP/specialist clinician to understand whether your child is still classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

All other children, including those living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable should continue to attend.

Coats and uniform

In our efforts to increase ventilation in classrooms, it's likely that it may be a bit chilly during the winter months when the windows are open. Children are allowed to wear their coats in class if this is the case. We do have a 'tank top' as part of the uniform for both boys and girls, so please consider this if your child is cold. The uniform shop continues to be open online for home delivery.

A reminder also we have a stock of pre-loved uniform in school if you are struggling and would like support with replacing uniform which is too small or has worn out. We don't have tank tops, however we do have some of the other main uniform items.

Kindness and Wholeness

This week in worship our chaplain, Michael, has been talking to our young people about kindness and wholeness which is our theme for this half term. He reminded us of the words of Jesus: "love your neighbour as you love yourself". It is so very important at this difficult time for us to be able to make each other's lives a bit easier by being kind to each other, as well as taking time to look after our whole selves. I hope you will find time to look after yourselves this weekend.

I pray for you and your families at this time, whatever your situation. If you do find yourself in challenging circumstances, please let us know so that we can try to support you where we can.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Walmsley
Principal