



24th November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that we will not be able to accommodate our Yr 8 students on campus for the remainder of this week, starting tomorrow morning. This has not been an easy decision to make, nor has it been taken lightly, but at the point of writing this letter I have been made aware of 21 teaching staff who will not be in school tomorrow as well as a number of support staff too.

Given these significant numbers of absences we cannot safely staff the campus with our normal student numbers, nor can we cover the lessons needed with the capacity we have on site. I not only have to balance the need to deliver lessons but also ensure unstructured times (before/after school, break and lunch) are safe and can be adequately supervised, again with such high absence this can not be guaranteed.

Over the past weeks we have made use of spare capacity on the timetable, paid part time staff, deployed support staff, used SLT to cover and made use of agency staff too. Agency staff are becoming very hard to secure in the current climate and we cannot be assured we could get the numbers needed to cover our current absences, despite contacting agencies already this weekend. In normal circumstances we would look to collapse groups and bring them together in large spaces such as the hall, in the current climate this simply isn't possible or desirable.

I'm also mindful that if I were not to act now this would give parents very little time to make alternate arrangements in the morning if even more staff were absent tomorrow. This is clearly a very undesirable situation and I appreciate the disruption this will cause but, having spoken to Trustees today too, we are in agreement that it is the right course of action to keep the campus, and our children, safe.

**We have selected Yr 8 for the following reasons:**

To protect examination groups both at GCSE / A-Level

To keep the youngest students on site for the longest period possible - as child care may prove more difficult for Year 7 students

We will of course invite students back on campus as soon as it is safe to do so but with the nature of staff seeking tests and self isolating I often have no clear time frames of who will remain out of school and who will return.

Every effort will be made to ensure that lessons will be set on Google classrooms so that students can continue their studies from home, but please be aware that some Yr 8 teachers will be needed to cover the absences shared. Work is already uploaded to many Google Classrooms in advance.

We will update you as soon as reasonably possible to confirm when students will return to campus but in the interests of planning please assume Yr 8 students will not be in school for the remainder of this week (25th to 27th November). Should the situation not improve we would look to rotate to another Year group the following week and this would be Year 7, especially given some of these students are already isolating until Thursday 3rd December.

Yours sincerely



Will Teece  
Headteacher



Connor Acton  
Chair of Trustees