



## Oastlers School

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Dear Parent/Carers

I thought it time now to write to you and update you on where we are at in school during this extraordinary time.

Government guidance comes into school every day, some it clear, some utterly confusing. I admit to you all to be struggling with the constant updates, messages and information that simply makes life incredibly challenging.

That said, school is open. This is in line with the current guidance.

I appreciate some learners have been absent from school due to confusion that many of you experienced about whether the school was open or not following the Prime Ministers announcement on Sunday evening. Since then all of you have been contacted to ascertain your views about whether you consider school to be safe for your child to attend, or not, during the lockdown. Thank you for your cooperation with this task.

As a result, we have some children accessing online learning because families have said they do not consider it to be safe for their child to attend school or for other legitimate health and safety reasons. We are supportive of your individual reasons.

For those of you who have expressed a desire for continued attendance, it may be that we cannot operate safely due to high numbers wishing to attend school. We may switch to a rota system that would enable all those children wishing to be in school the opportunity to attend, even if it were subject to a rota system.

What I am clear about is the health and safety of our children and our school staff is my priority.

For those children accessing home learning, our VLE is fully populated with activities and lessons and we also offer a paper based pack for those who prefer.

I am aware that some struggle with the online offer. Some have technical problems, some find it difficult to navigate and this creates no end of frustration. **If you find you are having problems with any aspect of home learning, please telephone Ray Sutcliffe on 01274 307456.** Ray will then ensure your problems are allocated to the right person who is best able to help.

Another important development is the **National Testing Programme**. You may have heard the Government is asking secondary phase schools to offer what is called a 'lateral flow test' to all staff and learners to see if they are infected with COVID-19 but have no symptoms. We are currently engaged with training and preparations for this testing in school and I will inform you when we are ready.



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Essentially, it is similar to the testing that is taking place in various test centres in that a sample is taken from the throat and nose but results for this test are available, in school, within 30 minutes. The results are said to be between 30%-90% reliable. If a learner is happy to perform the test independently that is permissible but there will also be a dedicated member of staff to perform the test if that is a better option.

**Consent forms for the testing have been sent out, we must have them signed and returned as soon as possible please.**

What must be stressed is, that despite the consent documents being signed by you as our parents/carers, if a learner refuses the test at the allocated time, they will not be forced and the offer of a test is withdrawn. A child may come back for testing later, as we understand fully, it is not an especially pleasant experience and some children will be very nervous and will need a lot of support, which will be offered at school.

If a child is positive, then a self-isolation period would follow, as per the current guidance, for ten days. Contacts of those tested positive will be tested for a period of seven days, in school, which avoids the need for self-isolation unless they themselves test positive.

**For all questions about this important programme, please telephone Jeanine Fairbairn on 01274 307456.**

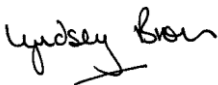
News about exams is now clear. This year will be the same as last summer. All GCSE examinations have been cancelled and once again your teachers will submit to the relevant exam boards teacher assessments based on past and current performance and a proposed GCSE grade based on that performance. BTEC assessments are continuing at this point in time, there is no change to the BTEC awards.

So, its hectic at the moment and there lingers much anxiety about the spread of the new variants of COVID which has resulted in yet another lockdown.

We are here for you and will try our very best to support you through this worrying time. Please get in touch with us if you need any support be it about home learning, concerns about the testing programme, communication with your teachers, help with food shortages or any matter that you think we could help you with. Supermarket vouchers will be sent to for those learners not in school who are receipt of free school meals.

For now, I wish that you all remain safe and well during these very difficult, unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely



Lyndsey Brown  
Headteacher