

NR/CH

29 October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Difficult though it is to believe, we've already reached the end of the first half term of the academic year – and what a half term it's been!

Thank you for your support throughout the past 8 weeks in supporting us to uphold some new, and many familiar, routines and expectations.

Behaviour and attendance have been outstanding by the vast majority of our students – thank you for supporting us in implementing the behaviour ladder and joining us in praising students who obtain merits and other recognition through the rewards lighthouse.

Our resilient and reliable students have settled into their new ways of working superbly well, and the limited movement around the school including different arrangements for lunch and social times have been adopted with good grace and understanding.

Coronavirus cases at JCSC

At the time of writing this letter we have had no students or teachers with confirmed cases of coronavirus – and hopefully that will remain the case. We have had a few members of our community self-isolating with suspected symptoms themselves, or because a member of their household has symptoms and is awaiting test results.

I know that many schools in the north east area, particularly secondary and high schools, have had at least one case of covid-19 within their student body. Indeed, whilst many schools have had quite serious outbreaks, we have yet to record our first case.

I do think we would be incredibly fortunate to completely avoid any cases of coronavirus in our school population, but the fact that we have done so thus far suggests to me that the procedures we have in place to keep our staff and students safe are very effective. Furthermore, it tells me our community is playing their part in ensuring guidelines are followed and minimising the risk of transmission outside of school. We're working well as a team to ensure our community is kept as safe as possible.

Uniform

You will be aware that we relaxed our uniform policy at the start of this academic year, in order to comply with the best practice in terms of washing clothing more regularly during the pandemic. Since that time, advice on this matter has been updated and we have now agreed a phased return for the remainder of the year, culminating in full uniform resuming for all students in September 2021. The first stage in that plan commences immediately after the half term break and concerns PE kit.

When we return after the half term break, safe and covid-secure changing facilities for PE lessons will be in place, and therefore normal uniform must be worn every day, with PE kit brought in schoolbags for timetabled lessons.

Other immediate notices about uniform are:

- Please ensure that students attend in the appropriate clothing. Students should only be wearing **plain navy, black, or grey hoodies with small logos, no bigger than the school logo on the school jumper**. If students choose to wear something that does not fit this criteria then they may well have demerits or detentions for this.
- Our trial of wearing coats in classrooms with the permission of the teacher has left many of our students unsettled due to the inconsistency across classrooms. We knew this may have been the case but our students have found this more of a challenge than expected. Therefore, we have decided to return to our policy of **no coats inside the school building**. We will keep this under review and if we feel it appropriate we will make a whole school decision around the wearing of coats depending on the weather that day.
- Given this, and the likelihood of colder weather in the coming weeks, we would recommend that white vests or t-shirts are worn school shirts
- A reminder to all that nose piercings are not allowed in school, nor are leggings and jeans as part of school uniform. There are no exceptions to this rule.

We are bringing in the following future uniform changes from January 2021 – this should hopefully give parents and carers time to plan:

- After the Christmas break, **the only hoodies that can be worn in the school building are the JCSC school hoodies**.
- From the same date we will expect all our students to be wearing **black polishable school shoes of a formal style. No trainers or footwear with clear branding will be allowed**. Therefore, Nike (e.g. Air Force 1s), Converse, Vans, TOMS, Stan Smiths, etc will not be accepted along with black plimsoll style shoes, although this is not an exhaustive list. Please consult your child's PSO if you require any further guidance or support on footwear as there will be no exceptions to these expectations unless supported with medical evidence.

Remote Learning

From March 20th until the end of the summer term, the vast majority of teaching and learning was done via online platforms, with Google Classroom being used most effectively. Since we returned in September, we have continued to develop our remote learning so that any students who are absent due to self-isolation or illness are able to access the lessons they are missing from home.

In fact, this is an area of our curriculum offer that we are continuing to invest a great deal of time and effort in, and it is a hugely important focus for us for the rest of this term and beyond. We want to be able to ensure that any absent student, or groups of students should we face a major outbreak or a lockdown situation, has access to a learning experience which is as close to being in that lesson as possible. We don't want absence to be a barrier to progress and to superb examination results at KS2, GCSE or A-level.

Additionally, if we have high quality content on our online platform, students will have immediate access to lessons and resources that they can revisit in the evening, at weekends or during holidays from anywhere. Suddenly revision becomes much more meaningful and focused when it's delivered by their teacher rather than written in a study guide.

As a school, we have decided to move all online teaching and learning activity to Google Classroom, as we believe it offers the best combination of features for now and for the future. To minimise the number of messages you receive and logins you will need to monitor your child's progress, we will stop using ShowMyHomework as a means of communication and use Google Guardians instead.

Google Guardians is the mechanism to keep parents informed about the work that has been set for their child, as well as details about homework. As a guardian, you can get email summaries about your child's activity in Classroom. Email summaries do not include grades. In email summaries, you can review:

- Missing work—Work not handed in when the summary was sent.
- Upcoming work—Work that's due today and tomorrow (for daily emails) or that's due in the upcoming week (for weekly emails).
- Class activities—Announcements, assignments, and questions recently posted by teachers.

If there's no activity to report you might not get an email summary.

Over the next ten days or so, you should receive an email inviting you to become a guardian in Google Classroom for your child. Once you click to accept you can choose how often to receive updates about your child's learning – we recommend you select the daily update option.

If you haven't received an email before the beginning of next half term, Monday 2nd November, please let us know – we may need to update our records with your current email address.

Staffing Update

Mr Davison from the science department left us earlier this term to continue his work with Public Health England in the fight against coronavirus.

Mr Robson from the maths department leaves us today and returns to industry.

We wish them both the very best for the future.

Mr Allen, who has been working in the science department this term, joins us as a permanent member of staff, as does Mr Cooke who joins the maths team immediately after the half term break.

I'm know that both Mr Allen and Mr Cooke will be hugely successful in their work at JCSC, and I know you'll be looking forward to getting the chance to meet them in the future when meeting actual people in the flesh is far easier than it currently is...

Our number one priority throughout this pandemic remains the safety of our students, staff and community and it continues to be so. Should government guidance or our local circumstances change, we will act accordingly to keep our community safe, keeping you informed at all times.

If you have any queries or comments, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Best wishes



NEIL RODGERS

Executive Headteacher