

9 April 2021

Dear Parent / Carer / Student

I hope you and your family have had a pleasant and restful Easter. The national news on the pandemic is certainly encouraging with the opening, on Monday, of shops, hairdressers, gyms and pubs/restaurants (serving outdoors). In addition, the number of new cases of Covid-19 in our area is well below the national average with over 30,000 people have now having had their first vaccination.

At school, we will continue to operate with the same attention to health and hygiene nevertheless – the changes we have made to the school to keep everyone safe will remain in place despite the lower risk as these gains have been hard-won and no-one wants to become complacent and have another lockdown.

This letter is a quick reminder of some practical matters your child will need to remember for Monday:

- Lateral Flow Test – can you do a LFT test Sunday evening – we only need to know if the result is positive and you will need to stay at home and take a PCR test (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>) as it is possible to get a false positive result with the lateral flow method.
- The Government have said that you need to continue to wear face masks in the classroom until May half term – I know this will not be the news you would want to hear but you have been excellent complying with this last term.
- You did brilliantly last term, with attendance at 97% (compared to Hertfordshire's average of 89%) and a really good attitude to getting back to learning in the classroom. You also got used to the routine of coming to school really quickly – so well done!
- When you return on Monday, many things will be the same as last term but there are a couple of changes:
 - You will need to come to school each day in school uniform – and get changed for PE lessons (with exception to Year 7 and 9 when they have PE – a separate letter has been sent out by the PE Faculty explaining this).
 - We will be checking on school uniform next week – so please make sure you have school shoes (not trainers) and remember hoodies are not allowed. In the classroom, you will not be allowed to wear your coat (last term, we were more flexible about this). These changes are in line with those being made in all other Bishop's Stortford secondary schools.
- If you do have uniform issues due to unavailable stock, can you please make sure you have a letter or note from your parents. We do have some clean second-hand uniform if this helps. Please contact Mrs Byers at kbyers@birchwoodhigh.org.uk
- After school clubs will resume after Easter which is good news, but we are currently unable to plan for trips and visits. As soon as we are told we can - we will - as educational visits are a big part of our curriculum at Birchwood.

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- The **Café** will be fully open for breakfast, break time and lunchtime. We will continue to have zoned indoor areas for each year group but, with the nicer weather, you will be able to eat outside.
- Breakfast is served from 8.00am.
- Break time 11.00 -11.30am (in year bubbles).
- Lunch 1.20 – 2.00pm (in year bubbles) with the hot meal deal only £2.50.
- There are three different zones, the main café, pasta king hatch and sandwich hub so less waiting time for everyone with designated year bubble seating areas.
- Parents can top up via ParentPay or students can pay by cash via the cash machine in the café.

Finally, we know that some of you coped well during lockdown and remote learning and that others of you did not, in many cases for reasons beyond your control. During the summer term, your teachers will be helping you to catch up with any lost learning and there will be additional provision planned to help. Good luck also to Year 11 and 13 students with their forthcoming classroom and formal assessments.

I look forward to seeing you again on Monday.

Yours sincerely

Chris Ingate

Dr Chris Ingate
Principal