

Our Ref: SLT/FSC-2411WSL

Tuesday 24th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

A much briefer letter this week, mainly due to the fact that school has felt more settled during the last few days and we seem to have settled into our rhythm well, dealing with any Covid-19 situation that arises quickly and efficiently.

I'm writing this letter on Tuesday this week, the day that our Year 11 students finish their final PPE (Pre Public Exam - mock exam) after seven gruelling days. Their behaviour and attitude have been exemplary throughout the exams and we are allowing another seven school days for students who have been absent or self-isolating to catch up with any exams missed. We will hold our PPE Results Day on **Monday 14th December** and this will be an important event for our Year 11s, as they see where they are in each of their courses at the moment and set themselves clear goals and an action plan to make sure that they are ready for when the real exams begin next May.

Almost two years ago, when I sat with the governors and planned our school closure days for this year, we had no idea of the pandemic that would unfold in our lives. In that meeting we looked at staff welfare and the stresses of the school year and pointed out that we always have a dip in staff performance and an increase in staff absence at the end of November. This is because the Autumn term in schools is always the longest term, usually 75 school days compared to less than 60 for the Spring and Summer terms. Staff exhaustion levels combine with the start of the winter flu season and the shortest days to create a perfect storm, which can be difficult to manage in a school.

We decided in that meeting that we would organise our year differently, putting a school closure day at the end of November rather than at the beginning or end of a half term. This would give our staff one day of respite and allow batteries to be recharged before the push for the last three weeks of term. Our Governing Body agreed this change at a board meeting in March 2019 and details were published to parents shortly after on 25th March 2019 via email and on our social media. Subsequently, we have issued many reminders of the change to our calendar. Little did we know at that time that the country would be going through a pandemic and national lockdown!

As I look around my school, I see so many staff who are exhausted and who have given over and above for many months now, covering for self-isolating staff, providing remote learning for self-isolating students, recovering from having had Covid-19 themselves and struggling through the days despite ongoing breathing problems. They have all been heroes for our students and this community, having to deal with the stress and anxiety of being in close contact with others on a daily basis. This week, if the rumours coming from Whitehall are to be believed, they are to be told that their reward for serving our community and our students during this unbelievably difficult time is a pay freeze imposed by the government; a slap in the face to every one of my team who has come to school every day and put themselves at increased risk of catching Covid-19. I'm now even more grateful than ever that we have this school closure day in our calendar and I hope that as parents and carers you understand our rationale for this decision. You can access term dates for this academic year and next on our website [here](#).

Thank you to the parents who have put themselves forward for the Parent Governor vacancy. Candidate details will be circulated on Wednesday in a separate letter and a voting form will also be circulated so that all parents and carers can make their choice of who they would like to represent them on our Governing Body. Good luck to all of those involved in the process - the ballot vote closes on **Friday 11th December** and we will announce the results the following week, before we break for Christmas.

Last week, parents of Year 9 students were sent a letter asking their views around the NHS teenage vaccination programme, as a result of the school being selected at random by the Department for Education and Public Health England to take part in this annual survey. Should 24 or more of our parents participate and complete the online survey, the school will receive a payment of £300 from the DfE for our cooperation; so if you are a Year 9 parent, please take 10 minutes to click on the link [here](#) - every bit of money helps us out at the moment!

Speaking of surveys, this is the final week for parents, students and staff to vote on whether we will move to five brand new House names for next September or keep the existing four House names and simply add one new one. If you haven't voted yet, please do so by the end of the day on Friday using the link sent to you on 22nd October or by clicking [here](#).

North Lincolnshire Covid Emergency Assistance Fund

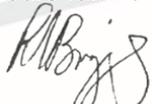
North Lincolnshire Council is providing emergency assistance to help residents who are struggling financially due to Covid-19. This can be in the form of providing food, helping with energy bills or replacing broken items, such as washing machines, fridges or freezers. Only households whose needs cannot be met in any other way, and who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, are eligible for the funding. This can include people who have been made redundant, are on furlough, lost hours at work or had minimal hours at work if on a zero hours contract. It cannot be used to buy items residents did not own beforehand. It also cannot be used to buy items of furniture or carpets. If you know of any families that will benefit from this emergency assistance grant, an online form can be completed [here](#). Alternatively, parents or people who are supporting them can ring 01724 297000 and ask for support to fill out the form.



And finally, Mr Browne, our Head of Bardney House and teacher of Design Technology, has been running 5km every day during November in aid of [Diabetes UK](#). Andy's daily run culminates next week, on Monday 30th. To celebrate this, he is running the final leg next Monday during Period 4 with the Year 9 cross country race. Anyone wanting to support Andy's efforts and help him reach £1,500 can do so by visiting his GoFundMe page [here](#).

Take care and thank you again for your continued support.

Yours faithfully


Richard Briggs
Head Teacher