

The logo for The Corsham School Academy Group. It features a blue square with the text 'THE CORSHAM SCHOOL' in white serif font at the top, and 'ACADEMY GROUP' in a smaller white sans-serif font at the bottom. The background of the square is filled with faint, light blue mathematical symbols and numbers.

# THE CORSHAM SCHOOL

ACADEMY GROUP

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

As we reach the end of Term 4 I continue to wish that you and those around you remain well and I hope that your family members in the top 4 vaccination priority groups have received, or been offered, their first vaccine dose.

With the recent warmer days, the relaxation of lockdown and more members of our community receiving their vaccinations, we all have reason to feel a little more cheerful and optimistic about the future; this has certainly been the feeling in school over the last few weeks with the students returning and the buzz and activity back to normal. We continue to be amazed by the resilience and spirit that your children have shown; their ability to adapt to the many challenges they have faced has been evident since their return on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

As Term 4 comes to an end I wanted to get in touch to provide you with a few important updates and reminders:

**Key messages in this letter:**

- **2021 Year 11 and Year 13 GCSE & A Level Grade Awarding Process**
- **Notification of an additional Teacher Development Day on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June**
- **Year 11 and Year 13 Leaving Dates Summer 2021**
- **Free School Meals Provision over the Easter Holiday and the COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme**
- **LFD Home Testing throughout the Easter Holiday**
- **Positive Covid Test Contact Tracing over the Easter Holiday**
- **A message from Wiltshire Council**

**Year 11 and 13 GCSE & A Level Grade Awarding Process**

Marcus Chapman has written to all Year 11 and Year 13 students, and their parents and carers about the process of awarding 2021 GCSE and A Level grades determined by teacher assessments of student performance and a robust quality assurance process.

The next 6 week term is going to be used by subject teachers to complete their programmes of study whilst also giving every student a 'chance to shine' and boost their grade evidence portfolio.

There is no doubt that for each and every year 11 and year 13 student the priority now is to make sure that at every opportunity they are trying to produce work of the very highest standard for the entirety of Term 5. I would like to congratulate all exam year students for the highly impressive attitude they have adopted over the past few weeks - they have been truly superb.

### **Notification of an additional Teacher Development Day on Monday 7th June**

As mentioned above, with the lack of 2021 exams and the onus very much on teachers to assess, mark, grade and moderate students' work to determine their final grades, **we have added a Teacher Development Day to the calendar on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June.**

This day will enable us to moderate students work, agree GCSE and A level grades and follow a robust quality assurance process before the grades need to be submitted to the exam boards by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June. This means that, in term 6, students will return to school on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June. Can I thank you for your continued support of staff in these challenging times and apologise for any inconvenience this calendar change will cause.

### **Year 11 and Year 13 Leaving Dates Summer 2021**

Last week the Department for Education (DfE) updated its guidance on Summer Term 2021 school attendance for the Year 11 and Year 13 exam cohorts. I thought it would be helpful to give you advance notice of our plans relating to Year 11 and Year 13 leaving dates.

In a normal exam season Year 11 and Year 13 students would leave school after their final exams finish, ordinarily around the end of June. However, in the absence of exams this year the needs of the cohort are very different.

The 2021 awarding grades approach requires schools to submit grades by 18 June 2021. This process requires considerable staff resource and in line with the awarding grades process described in Mr Chapman's letter, work done after the May half term will not contribute towards their grades. The DfE have not, however, changed their legislation that governs compulsory school age attendance and when students can legally cease to attend. This legislation doesn't impact on Year 13 but does mean that Year 11 are required to attend until 25<sup>th</sup> June.

The DfE have set out guidance about the type of valuable activities that students can be engaged in during the second half of the summer term whilst they are required to continue attending. This might not mean full-time provision, could include visits to other education providers, be made up of independent study or remote provision combined with attendance in person.

We have therefore set out the following which we think will best support students and meet their progression needs for their next steps during this period.

**Year 13 – Last day of compulsory attendance will be 28<sup>th</sup> May.** After this time staff will be available to offer support to students if they need help with their transition into Further Education, Higher Level Apprenticeship or into employment.

**Year 11 – Last day of compulsory attendance will be Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June.** After the May half term break, between Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June, we will engage Year 11 in a variety of activities planned to better prepare students for their transition onto level 3 academic and vocational pathways with us and other post 16 providers.

We usually plan a number of different events in the last week for each exam cohort to celebrate their achievements and mark the end of their school journey with us. Unfortunately, we are unable to confirm these arrangements at present as we must wait and see what happens with Covid, the roadmap and hoped relaxation of restrictions. We remain hopeful that we can bring positive news on this next term.

### **Free School Meals Provision over the Easter Holiday and the COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme**

Local Authorities have been provided with funds to support families facing hardship during these unprecedented times under the COVID Winter Grant Scheme. As you will know, some of these funds have been used to make sure children eligible for benefit-related Free School Meals have access to food for their lunches over the school holidays. Yet, again, in addition to our normal food voucher arrangements for the holiday period, Wiltshire Council will be supporting the same families with an additional £30 Supermarket Voucher, this Voucher will be sent in the usual way.

### **LFD Testing at home throughout the Easter holidays for schools and colleges**

Following the success of the asymptomatic testing programme on students' return to school and college, it is vital to keep testing at home throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. We have given out enough LFD home test kits to each student so they can:

- continue to test twice a week at home during the holiday (for all those who are able to)
- report results online as positive, negative or void. This information is critical in helping us to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or the morning of, the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases.

### **Positive Covid Test Contact Tracing over the Easter Holiday**

Schools continue to play an important role in supporting the NHS Test and Trace process over the holiday period by continuing to be responsible for contact tracing for those pupils and staff who were attending school up until the 1<sup>st</sup> April. As a reminder, I wanted to clarify what you should do if your child tests positive for COVID-19 during the February break.

Public Health have identified a 6-day window after the final day of teaching in which schools must be informed so we can assist with contact tracing should your child test positive for Covid-19 over the holiday period.

- 1) Parents/carers must continue to inform the school of confirmed student positive test cases if symptoms developed within 48 hours of last being in school (up to and including Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April if they were in school on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>).
- 2) Parents/carers of pupils who were not symptomatic but tested positive within 48 hours of last being in school (up to Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April if they were in school on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>) also need to let the school know.

For example:

If a pupil was last in school on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April:

- Develops Covid Symptoms on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April (within 48 hours of last being in school)
- Gets PCR tested on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April
- Receives a positive PCR result on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April
- Notifies us by email on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April.

The student will have been infectious while in school on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April and we would need to contact Public Health who would carry out their risk assessment and potentially ask the year group bubble to self isolate.

- 3) Where a student tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since last being in school (from Sunday onwards if they were in school on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>), **the school does not need to be contacted**. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

**If you need to inform the school of a student positive Covid-19 test result as per 1) and 2) above please email me at [Rbell@corsham.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:Rbell@corsham.wilts.sch.uk)** as all other telephone lines/inboxes will not be monitored over the holiday period. If informing me of a positive case it would be really useful if you could include the following information within your email:

- Name of Child and Year Group
- Date of the Home LFT Covid test Result (if done as there were no symptoms)
- Date of onset of COVID-19 symptoms (including what symptoms they had)
- Date of the confirmatory PCR Covid Test result (and evidence of the result/ID number)
- Date your child was last in school
- How do they travel to school?
  - E.g. walk, cycle, car, public transport, school transport, taxi
  - If by car – do you car share with anyone else?
  - If public transport/school transport do they know who they sat near?

At the start of Term 5 on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April you will need to continue to inform us if your child tests positive, is self-isolating or symptomatic and contact the school via [Attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:Attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk) whilst also making sure your child self-isolates for the required number of days.

If you have any urgent concerns about your child's welfare over the holiday break, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Chris Smith, Pastoral Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead via his email: [CSmith@corsham.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:CSmith@corsham.wilts.sch.uk)

#### **A message from Wiltshire Council**

*Dear Parents and Carers,*

*As we head towards the Easter holiday, which I'm sure many of you are looking forward to, we thought now would be a good opportunity to thank you for your continued efforts in playing your part to reduce the COVID-19 virus rates in Wiltshire.*

*By all accounts, the majority of children have settled back into their normal school-life very quickly following the restrictions that came into place in January. We know it's been a very unpredictable period for you and the children but your support and patience has been appreciated.*

*We would also like to say thank you to the parents and carers of secondary school pupils who have been faithfully taking LFD tests twice weekly. Please remember to continue using the twice weekly tests over the Easter holidays and report the results.*

*Parents of early years, primary and secondary school aged children can also pick up LFD tests so they can carry out twice weekly tests on themselves. Please also continue to do this during the Easter break. If you need details of where to access these tests details are here:*

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus-testing>

*We have seen COVID-19 virus rates in Wiltshire fall considerably in the last two months or so. At one point in January the rates of cases per 100k in Wiltshire over a seven-day period was 364.8,*

*and since then we have seen that figure fall to 27.2. However, to put that in context – a figure of more than 20 would have caused great concern last year so we still have to be on our guard. We are of course in a much more positive place; with the ongoing success of the vaccination programme and a roadmap in place that we are all working towards, which will hopefully see restrictions further eased over the next few months.*

*Until that point though, it's still so important that we closely follow the rules currently in place and keep playing our part over the Easter break. So here are just a few things to bear in mind:*

- *Overnight stays are not allowed under the restrictions*
- *From 12 April people can travel as a household to self-contained accommodation where no other households are present*
- *Meeting indoors is not allowed under the restrictions*
- *You can meet up to six people or two households in a garden as well as a public space*
- *Remember to keep socially distancing.*

*Thank you again to you and your family for playing your part. If we continue to stick to the guidance better days are not far away.*

*Your sincerely,*

*Kate Blackburn*

*Director of Public Health for Wiltshire*

*Helean Hughes*

*Director – Education & Skills, Wiltshire Council*

**And finally,**

I want to thank you all for your kind words and support over the last term too, both personally and for my staff. We continue to strive to provide the students of Corsham and our wider community with better or equal life chance than any other students in the UK, including privately educated ones.

It has been fantastic having all the students back on site for the last few weeks, I certainly look forward to a full term of in school learning after Easter. Next term will be a challenging one for our Year 11 and 13 students as they embrace their 'chance to shine' but I know they are up to the challenge ahead. We are all in this together and we will support them in navigating the next couple of months.

Look after yourselves and those around you and wishing you all, every health and hope this Easter.

Take care,

Rod Bell

Headteacher