

7th December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that you and those around you remain well and those in the very unfortunate position of testing positive for Covid-19 can recover quickly. Although it was disappointing to be told that we needed to ask our Corsham6th Students to self isolate and learn remotely, as a precaution in relation to our recent confirmed student case, it is pleasing to be in the position where we still have all other year groups attending school. We very much hope this remains the case for the remaining two weeks left of term 2.

I am again writing to inform you of some timely reminders and important updates to our procedures as a result of exiting our recent lockdown, the Tier 2 restrictions that came into effect last week and some other updates in the Department for Education guidance for schools and childcare settings.

Key messages in this letter:

- **Updated DfE guidance on new local restriction tiers**
- **End of Term 2 and the Christmas Period**
- **Update on our Face Covering policy as a result of lockdown restrictions ending/Tier 2 Restrictions.**
- **School Transport**
- **Free School Meals over the Christmas Holidays**
- **GCSE and A Level Exams Summer 2021**
- **A reminder about Covid-19 Symptoms, Testing and Self Isolation**

Updated DfE guidance on new local restriction tiers

The government has updated its guidance for [schools](#) to reflect the end of the recent national restrictions. These documents set out how education settings should operate under the local restriction tiers.

The key point to make is that there were no substantive changes for settings to act on. These documents largely indicate a return to the guidance as it was before the current lockdown.

A few things to flag up that is relevant for schools:

- *In Tiers 2 and 3, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils in settings where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. In Tier 1, this reverts to being at the discretion of individual schools. From Monday 7th December for pupils aged over 11 it will be mandatory to wear a face covering whilst on dedicated school transport (this does not apply to primary school children or those pupils who are on SEND transport). Please see the separate notes below on Face Coverings.*
- *The following sentence has been added to the section on managing positive cases: “Where individuals who are self-isolating are within our definition of vulnerable, it is important that schools put systems in place to keep in contact with them, offer pastoral support, and check they are able to access education support”.*
- *Pupils who are extremely clinically vulnerable are expected to come into school, in all three tiers, unless they have been advised specifically by their GP or clinician not to attend.*

- *The government continues to advise against overseas educational visits, and overnight domestic visits. This advice will be reviewed in February.*
- *All breakfast and after-school provision can resume, in all tiers.*
We plan to resume our Extra-Curricular activities, should we continue to be allowed, in Term 3.
- *Schools in Tier 3 should not host music or drama performances with an audience. Schools in Tier 1 or 2 wishing to do this should follow the DCSM performing arts guidance.*
- *Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, but schools can hold PE lessons indoors if necessary, within their own system of controls.*

End of Term 2 and the Christmas Period

The good news of the beginnings of a vaccine rollout in hospitals and care homes this week has been well timed for the beginning of the festive season; I hope it is giving you all a bit more of a sense of hope as the Christmas decorations go up!

It is also of some reassurance that we are seeing the transmission rate in Wiltshire fall below the national average. However, there's obviously a long way to go and it is important, bearing in mind our recent cases, that we remind students about how important it is not to drop their guard in or out of school.

It is vital that all students continue to do all they can to protect themselves, their families and staff. This is particularly significant as we approach the school holiday period which commences at 12noon on Friday 18th December. The self-isolation (for confirmed cases and their close contacts) continues over the Christmas period, and the last thing we want to have to do is inform parents of the need for their children to self-isolate over some of the festive break.

So, please reinforce this to your children, the vast majority of whom continue to be brilliant in the way they are conducting themselves. However, a few still need reminding about wearing their face coverings and the need to socially distance outside of classrooms.

Keep playing your part and prevent increased restrictions being introduced in Wiltshire:



Keep washing hands regularly



Wear face coverings in enclosed spaces



Stay at least 2 metres apart



Follow rule of six



Self-isolate when instructed

#WiltshireTogether

Update on our Face Covering policy as a result of lockdown restrictions ending/Tier 2 Restrictions.

In reviewing the recently updated DfE guidance on face coverings which remains unchanged from the lockdown restrictions for Tier 2 regions, whilst considering the ongoing incidence of localised confirmed cases, we continue to endeavour to keep our children, staff and you safe whilst remaining open. As a result, our Face Covering policy will remain unchanged, for the remaining two weeks of term.

We have seen a recent increase in some students arriving at school without a face covering so I again request that you supply your child with a washable reusable fabric face covering, instead of a disposable one, and check they have it before they leave for school.

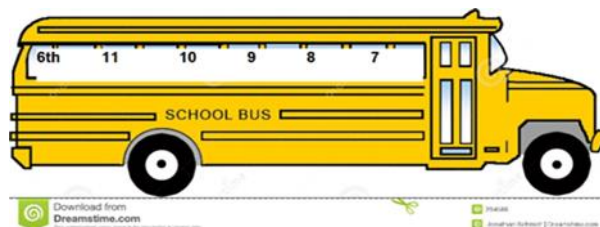
School Transport

May I thank you and your children for observing the bus travel rules. Pupils are remembering to wear their masks on buses and this is most helpful. I also wish to remind you of our procedures for maintaining bubbles on buses. Wherever children board a bus, it is important that bus queues remain segregated. 6th form together at the front of the queue, then Year 11 students together, then Year 10 and so on.

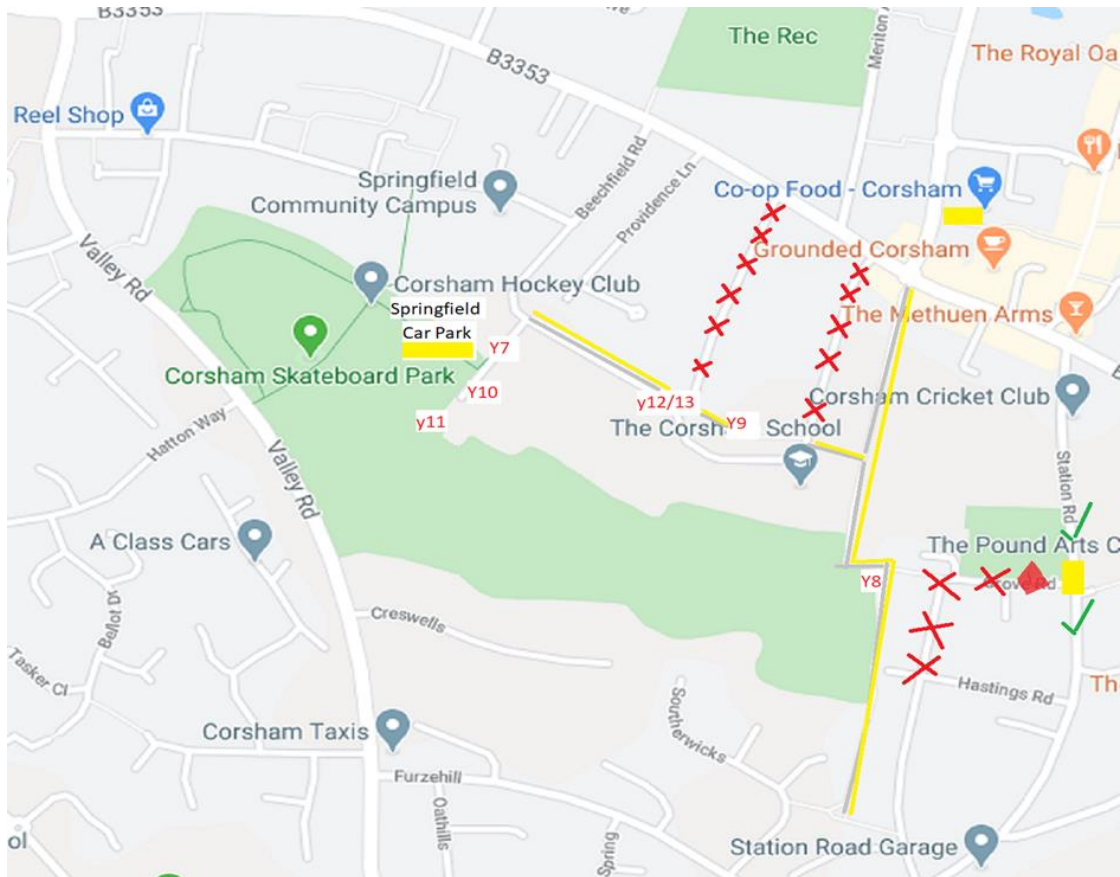
Likewise, when boarding starts, 6th form get on first and go to the back of the bus, followed by Year 11 sitting together in front of 6th form, then Year 10 with Year 7 at the front.

To assist you in talking through this with your child/children I am reissuing the graphics we used to brief pupils of these rules.

In the event of having to close a bubble and keep a year group away from school, it would be a shame to have to include a whole bus load in this closure because the guidelines above were not being followed.



Again, I need to thank you for your help in ensuring a smooth start to the day and observing the guidelines concerning gates and drop offs in the mornings. There is one reminder concerning the Year 8 gate that I would like to bring to your attention. South Street and Grove Rd are too narrow and therefore not suitable for school drop off. In addition, Jargeau Court, the Residential Home in Grove Rd, has asked us to politely request that you avoid any parking in this area, access is crucial for them and Station Rd is much more appropriate and only a stone's throw away from the gate.



Free School Meals Provision over the Christmas Period

The government has confirmed for those families who normally receive free school meals they will also be available throughout the Christmas holiday period. We are in the process of confirming these arrangements and we will be in touch with these families with more information in due course.

GCSE and A Level Exams Summer 2021

You may have seen the announcement on Thursday about the changes to exams for this summer to support students by making them as fair as possible and manage the disruption caused by coronavirus (COVID-19).

Building on the 3 week delay to exams to free up extra teaching time announced in October, the new measures include:

- more generous grading than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020, so students this year are not disadvantaged
- students receiving advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A levels to focus revision
- exam aids, for example formula sheets, provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise
- additional exams to give students a second chance to sit a paper if the main exams or assessments are missed due to illness or self-isolation
- a new expert group to look at differential learning and monitor the variation in the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on students across the country

Whilst it is not ideal, it certainly goes some way to giving schools, students and families reassurance about how the exams are going to work in the summer. The government will set out further detail on this process and on adaptations to exams in the new year and we will be communicating more with parents in Year 11 and 13 then to ensure they are fully aware of the current position.

A reminder about Covid-19 Symptoms, Testing, Self Isolation and Test & Trace

A reminder that it is essential that students self-isolate at home and book a coronavirus test if they develop one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- the loss or change of their sense of taste or smell

Testing can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. There is no need for other members of their household to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

Students should also self isolate at home if someone in their household has developed the Covid-19 Symptoms and is awaiting the outcome of a Covid Test. The attached 'Covid-19 Information: A Quick Guide for Parents and Carers' is a helpful reminder of the 'What to do if's... and the actions required.

Further self isolation guidance information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Again, apologies for the length of this letter but it's important to update you on such matters.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Take care

Rod Bell
Headteacher