

5th January 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians

I would like to start by wishing all of our community a happy new year and I hope families were able to have a peaceful and enjoyable break. I wanted to write at the start of this new term with some important information, primarily focusing on the situation with COVID-19 and the local disruption caused by investigatory works for HS2.

COVID-19 updated guidance - masks

I am sure many of you will have seen the announcements over the past few days related to updated guidance for schools. We have been wearing face masks where social distancing cannot be maintained since last half term and will continue to do so until further notice. I would again like to thank students for the maturity they have shown with the wearing of masks and parents/guardians for the support the school has received for this safety measure.

Please note that, whilst we have a plentiful supply of masks, students should be bringing their own masks in from home. From Monday 10th January 2022, students will be sanctioned if they do not have a mask, in line with other uniform requirements. Please contact office@ruisliphigh.org.uk for the attention of your child's Head of Year should you have any questions or concerns.

COVID-19 testing

We had a high uptake of students receiving lateral flow tests yesterday and today and I would like to thank parents/guardians for the support for the tests and disrupted start to the term, and thank students for their impeccable behaviour during the testing process. For the first time we did have positive cases from the testing; the small number of students who tested positive are self-isolating and it is a reminder that we must all continue to play our part and test regularly. Students should now be testing at home twice a week and should ask their tutor if they require more lateral flow tests.

COVID-19 - potential staffing issues

We currently have a number of staff who are self-isolating having tested positive for COVID-19. I know we are not the only local school in this position and I am pleased that all staff members with COVID-19 are not experiencing serious symptoms. We are currently able to keep the school operating as usual, although your child may have lessons covered by staff other than their usual teacher in the coming days. I have no desire to switch to remote learning for whole year groups but I trust parents/guardians appreciate that this is a rapidly changing situation and, should there be further staff absence, I may have to make such a decision. I am working with the senior team to plan for contingencies, including delaying and/or cancelling potential upcoming events and I will of course keep parents/guardians updated with any changes.

I have made the decision to postpone the reward trip that was planned to take place next month. Whilst I appreciate that students look forward to events such as this, I trust parents/guardians appreciate that my priority must be in keeping the school running at this time. It is important that we reward our students for their impeccable behaviour but a mixed-year group cinema trip would not be appropriate in the current situation.

COVID-19 - remote learning

I would like to remind families that, in any instance when a student cannot attend school due to reasons linked to COVID-19, remote learning will be available. Please click [here](#) to see the full information that has been shared previously and is on our website.

For parents/guardians of students in Years 7-11, should your child be self-isolating, they should complete all work set and record this on the Remote Learning Log (RLL) which is shared via tutor group Google Classrooms. Parents/guardians should check the RLL and make sure it is submitted at the end of the week/self-isolation period. There is a separate process for students in Years 12-13.

Should your child be too unwell to complete work, or should parents/guardians have any questions about remote learning, please email office@ruisliphigh.org.uk for the attention of your child's Head of Year.

COVID-19 updated guidance - self-isolation

The national guidance regarding self-isolation for those testing positive for COVID-19 has also changed, and the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result has been reduced to seven days, unless the individual cannot test for any reason.

Should your child test positive for COVID-19, they may now take a lateral flow test on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. The first test must be taken no earlier than day six of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. Should both tests be negative, and as long as your child does not have a high temperature, the self-isolation can end after the second negative test result and your child can return to school.

HS2 - disruption on Sidmouth Drive and West End Road

As I wrote in my update at the end of last term, there are exploratory works for HS2 taking place from today until the end of next week. Please click [here](#) for the schedule of work that has been shared locally. We have seen today that this is causing disruption and backlogs of traffic along West End Road in both directions, and along Sidmouth Drive. Please avoid driving in this area if at all possible, and please allow extra time for your child travelling to and from school, particularly for those students who catch the bus. It is likely to be significantly quicker to walk, or to use bus stops further away from the school site. Please also remind your child to take extra care when crossing the road as there are temporary traffic lights and the road is far busier than usual. Where possible, additional staff will patrol the area before and after school over the coming week.

Year 7 and Year 8 exams next week

The planned Year 7 and 8 exams will take place in lessons during the week of 10th January 2022. Please click [here](#) for information regarding Year 7 exams and [here](#) for Year 8. Should parents/guardians have any questions about the exams, please contact your child's Head of Year via the main school office.

Finally, with roadworks and continued uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, it may feel like a less than joyful start to 2022. However, what we have seen over the past two years of the pandemic is that the school community has always been able to work together to overcome challenges. It has been a delight to welcome students in Years 7, 11 and 13 back to school today and to see students working hard in lessons and enjoying their social opportunities. The resilience of the young people in our care is incredibly impressive and a real credit to the whole community. We are looking forward to welcoming the students in all years back tomorrow for what I feel confident will be a successful term and new year.

Yours sincerely



Gareth Davies
Headteacher