

11th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As families around the world start to reflect on end of this year, we finally entered the Christian tradition of Advent, the period four Sundays and weeks before Christmas. In many households the reality is it means the joy of chocolate from the 1st December until Christmas Day as we open up our paper windows to reveal a treat. For me this tradition annually starts to allow school to prepare for the festivities ahead and to pause and consider the reason we take this holiday.

During this same holiday season millions of people, particularly from a Jewish faith, begin the celebration of Hanukkah and the miracle that kept the flames of menorah burning for eight nights. Both these religious festivals are based on bringing light to the world and having faith that throughout all the chaos that the human spirit of hope and togetherness will prevail. I believe it will!

We all know that the festive season this year will be different for many in our community. For those who have been affected physically, emotionally or socially then may our prayers and good wishes from all at Neston High School bring you some comfort.

Our young people have shown exceptional character this year, dealing with trauma, anxiety and the unknown and I can truly say they have been outstanding in the way they have worked in partnership with my colleagues to prevail and build a way forward. For this I formally thank you as parents/carers for your ongoing support for our young people and the incredible positive response you have shown us as we tried to do our best in the maelstrom of the ever-changing national, regional and local events.

I understand that for us all we encounter a different Christmas and New Year and that from next Friday you will wish to take time away from school so my final letter on the 18th December will just be a note of any further updates.

Below I have clarified arrangements regarding the last week of term and how my colleagues will continue to support our school and community by still providing appropriate track and trace until 24th December and then towards re-opening on 4th January 2021.

Important information about the last day of term

You will have seen reports this week that the Department of Education have advised that schools may use an INSET day and close one day early, to reduce the Track and Trace time length for schools. As we have already allocated the INSET days for this year we will continue to be open until Friday 18th December. If we decided to use this optional day, the DfE have stated that schools lose an INSET day in the following academic year. Ultimately this is 20% of training days for our schools, which clearly is unethical. It also feels, once again, there would be little time for families to make arrangements or for us to plan an effective use of the day. However, to find a middle ground as this is traditionally a day where school finishes earlier for the Christmas break the school day has been amended slightly for students and they will now be able to leave at 12.15pm.

Friday 18th December 2020

School will open as normal for students at 8.30am. An adapted timetable is in place with a longer break mid-morning where a “brunch option” is available for students to purchase at their normal dedicated food outlet. Students will then be able to leave school at 12.15pm. Buses will leave school at this time. School re-opens as normal on Monday 4th January. Students can enter the building from 8.30am.

Covid-19 / Track and Trace arrangements during the Christmas break

The guidance for school remains unchanged. School is open to all students unless they are unwell or required to isolate. **If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms or is awaiting a test result they should isolate and not come to school.** Please alert school if your child receives a positive Covid-19 test result via the email address C19alert@nestonhigh.com. This continues to be monitored out of hours and parents/carers of students who are required to isolate will be contacted by text and email.

School is required to isolate students if they have been identified as a close contact to a positive case in the 48 hours before the onset of symptoms. **Please be aware we will to continue to do this during the festive period until Thursday 24th December 2020.** Please continue to report cases using the C19alert@nestonhigh.com email address until 12.15pm on Thursday 24th December. After this point please liaise directly with NHS Track and Trace **as contact will have been out of school.** If your child is required to isolate or have tested positive and will not return on the 4th January, please report their absence through the normal channels.

In summary

Up to 12.15pm on 24 th December	Email c19alert@nestonhigh.com if your child was in school 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms
From 12.15pm Thursday 24 th December until Sunday 3 rd January 2021	NHS Track and Trace will contact you directly if your child has tested positive. Email attendance@nestonhigh.com to advise if they will not be in school from Monday 4 th January
From Monday 4 th January 2021	Report any positive cases by emailing c19alert@nestonhigh.com

My team will, as we have done all term, maintain keeping those affected to a minimum to meet risk assessment. We apologise in advance if we have to make contact.

Christmas Jumper Day – Monday 14th December 2020

Just a reminder that Monday 14th December is Christmas Jumper Day. Students may wear a Christmas Jumper to school along with normal suitable own clothes. Please do not purchase a jumper specially if they do not have one but encourage them to get into the festive spirit with tinsel or festive accessories. We would like as many children as possible to provide a donation to support our local Food Banks via their tutor in exchange for this.

Keeping Children Safe at Christmas

Please find attached some excellent resources to help keep your child safe online this Christmas and beyond.

[Parent Resource Pack](#)

[Online safety this Christmas - Top Tips](#)

[Smart toys / devises safety information](#)

Finally, may I wish you all good health, much happiness for Christmas and 2021 and may the light of hope shine bright for you and your loved ones as we return in January.

K Simpson
Headteacher