

Dear Parent/Carer,

Given the difficult situation over recent weeks, we hope that this letter finds you all safe and well. As we approach the February half term there are some positive signs of improvement in the local situation regarding numbers of Coronavirus cases. In Newcastle, the seven day new case number has reduced again and now stands at 416, compared to 503 the previous week. The case number per 100,000 is 137 in Newcastle, compared to 198 in the North East and 184 nationally. This is good news, but there is clearly still a need for us all to play our part in driving these figures lower over the coming weeks so that we can return to a sense of normality sooner rather than later.

Information about our remote learning provision can be found on our dedicated page on the school website by selecting the second button on the home page. There are continual updates to this page as our remote learning programme evolves, so please check back regularly. This includes our plans to extend our live session provision from the start of next half term. Please be clear, this will complement the work set on Frog and OneDrive, it is not a replacement for it. Students need to remember to keep to a routine of timetabled lessons, wherever possible, and make sure they stop at the end of the school day.

In school, we have continued to cater for a very small minority of key worker and vulnerable students alongside completing some activity around vocational exams and conducting a successful Coronavirus testing trial. Please note that the school will be closed during the Half Term holidays, week beginning 15th February. Our provision for key worker and vulnerable students will resume on Monday 22nd February and continue until we are informed of the arrangements for a more extensive return to school. This provision is for vulnerable children and the children of key workers only. Children of key workers must be kept at home whenever possible and must only come into school if there is no safe alternative. There is no specialist provision in school, it is supervision only. To reduce the risk for everyone it is vital that we do as much as possible to control the transmission of the virus and follow the government advice to keep everyone as safe as possible and we would like to thank you all for your continued support with this.

Please continue to consult our key information and updates page on the school website as it is regularly updated. You can access this by selecting the first button on the home page. The Covid-19 isolation period is now 10 days and all positive cases of Covid-19 for students accessing provision in school only must be reported to the school immediately. Telephone the school on (0191) 2818486. If you are unable to speak with a member of staff in person do not leave a voicemail, please email us at admin@jesmondparkacademy.org.uk. There is an urgent need to report all positive cases for children attending the current school provision during term time and during school holidays. For the half term holidays you can report cases to school up until 11am each day until Tuesday 16th February (inclusive). After that please report positive cases directly to NHS 111.

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Considering the current situation around national examinations, it is clear that Y11 and Y13 students need to continue to engage fully with their lessons. The work that we are covering now may well feature in future assessments which could be used to determine a final grade. We know that it is a time of uncertainty for students and staff but what we can all do is focus on what is certain and within our control, and that is engaging purposefully in work set and submitting work regularly. The door for the awarding of grades is very firmly still wide open, so it is important that students do make the very best of the current situation. We will, of course, keep you fully updated with any developments when we receive information.

Regarding our Year 9 Options Process, all Year 9 students have been emailed a link to our One Drive where they can download subject specific PowerPoints. Information relating to this process can also be found on our website. The deadline for the completion of the options process is Monday 22nd February, just after the half term holidays. Students do need to take their time with this process and not attempt to submit their options form until they have carefully read through all of the information available. If there are any queries at all regarding the options process, or associated information, please email the most appropriate person detailed within the support information on our website.

Safeguarding our students is of paramount importance to us. We have a robust mental health offer with a full time school counsellor as well as narrated wellbeing PowerPoints being emailed to students weekly. If you feel you need to speak to anyone about your child's mental health please contact their Year Team or Mrs Earle via admin@jesmondparkacademy.org.uk. Online safety is also a subject that has been covered in assemblies with students as well as information being supplied to parents. We have an informative online safety page on the school website that is a helpful resource for parents and students. This can be found in *About the Academy/Other Information/Online Safety*.

The Free School Meal voucher scheme is now up and running and further information about this, including the latest updates, is on our website in the key information and updates page. We hope this helps those eligible families over the next few weeks. The instructions are reasonably self-explanatory but feel free to email us at admin@jesmondparkacademy.org.uk should you need support.

We hope that you all have a restful and enjoyable half term break with family. The staff fully appreciate what a difficult time this currently is for Parents/Carers and students. We would also like to pass on the thanks of the staff for the messages of support we have received, they are greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Paul Anderson/Claire Smith
Acting Principals