

10th December 2020



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Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding during these challenging times. Firstly, a huge well done to those students who are having to self-isolate and are logging on and engaging with online learning. This is testament to how focussed and engaged the majority of students have been despite the disruption to their learning. The staff have been impressed with their efforts (even if some of them are very shy in the remote classroom!) Teachers are working hard to manage face to face teaching for those in school, alongside remote lessons for those whose bubble or group are isolating and where possible, also uploading work to show my homework for individuals having to isolate too. Do contact us if you are you experiencing any issues relating to this.

We have had a number of enquiries asking if the school will be closed next week, or next Friday, to allow an isolation period prior to families getting together over Christmas. This week, the DfE and KCC sent an update to schools making it clear that schools must remain open.

King Ethelbert School will remain open for the last week of term including the morning of Friday 18th December, as planned. Details of the timings of the day are at the end of this letter.

Student absence next week (other than illness or enforced isolation) will be marked unauthorised in line with this, but given the challenging circumstances for families, the school will not be pursuing penalty notice fines.

Our core purpose remains the same; to educate your children whilst keeping them safe at the same time. Additionally, we recognise that many of our parents and carers are themselves key workers working in hospitals, care homes, schools and other public services and closing the school would present additional childcare challenges for those parents and carers. For every one of us there are worries about staying infection free in the lead up to Christmas with our families. In fact, as a school we have done well in containing any positive cases through good safety routines, rapid response contact tracing, risk assessing and timely actions. These actions have been commended by Public Health England and our Governing Body Health and Safety representatives who have toured the school and interrogated our systems. Please continue to support us in reminding your child of the importance of good hand hygiene and diligence in social distancing from other year group bubbles, especially at the school gates. May I also remind parents and students that those bubbles being asked to self-isolate absolutely **must** do so to contain the spread of this awful virus and these students should not be out and about during the 14-day isolation period. We really do appreciate the support from our parents and carers in navigating all of these challenges.

Schools are expected to continue to track and trace after Fri 18th December, for any member of our school community who tests positive, having developed symptoms within 48 hours of attending school. This means that it continues to be important that you **report to us immediately via MyEd, if your child develops symptoms over the weekend of 19th/20th December and subsequently tests positive.** We will have a duty rota in place to follow up and carry out track and trace from 08:00-10:00am during the follow up period affected. Where a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being on site, the school should not be contacted. Students should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

Finally, I wish to pay testament to the incredible student and staff team that I am privileged to work with. We have continued to face real difficulties with significant absences due to both staff and students having to isolate and I am humbled everyday by the way everyone pulls together to support each other. At times the challenges have felt like the most enormous mountain for students (and staff) to climb, but having others on our side willing to stand with us and navigate the way over the mountain is what gets us through. Our students are working hard, rising to the challenges and are on track to do well despite all they have had to contend with and this is testament to everyone's efforts.

I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas period and look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 4th January 2021.

Wish best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely



Mrs V Willis
Headteacher

FRIDAY 18th DECEMBER 2020: LAST DAY OF TERM

Non-School Uniform – students are encouraged to wear Christmas jumpers in aid of Anthony Nolan Charity (Saving the lives of people with blood cancer). 50p min donation/£1 if affordable.

PERIOD 1& 2: Lessons as normal

BREAK 1: Normal times

PERIOD 3: Tutor time

All students leave the site via their usual exit points as follows:

12.15pm YEAR 11/ YEAR 7

12.25pm YEAR 8 / YEAR 10

12.35pm YEAR 9 / YEAR 12/13

Students requiring a lunch will be able to go to the dining hall, upon dismissal before going home.