



ST IVES, HAYLE & CAPE CORNWALL SCHOOLS

22nd September 2020

Ref: JCW/hcb

Dear Parents / Carers

The Truro and Penwith secondary Schools (Hayle Academy, St Ives School and Cape Cornwall School) have now been re-open to all students for 3 weeks. The start of the Autumn Term is always extremely busy and we have been delighted to welcome our new Year 7 students to our school communities. To their credit, our students have adapted to the changes in school routines and our steps to minimise the risk of virus transmission with great maturity and our staff teams are very grateful for all the support we have received from our parents. Managing the schools and these new systems has inevitably taken up a lot of the time of our leadership teams and we have done our absolute best not to allow this to distract us from our key priorities: the education, care and welfare of our students. I very much hope that our students' experience has been all about their learning, progress and support and that our classrooms have been, to a large extent, a 'refuge' from the daily media focus on the pandemic.

Having said that, I am once again contacting our families to provide further information about the safe management of our schools against a national and local context where concern is growing about the rising number of cases. At the time of writing, we still have no confirmed cases of Covid 19 within our student or staff teams in any of our three secondary schools but I think we all expect that this is unlikely to remain the case over coming months and that, eventually, our schools may well have confirmed cases in significant numbers.

The Government has now launched its 'Hands, Face, Space' campaign to reinforce the key ways in which we can all help to reduce the risk of transmission. Our reopening plans have emphasized the importance of regular hand washing and sanitising and enhanced measures are in place in all our schools to ensure that students and staff are able to clean their hands regularly during the school day. Where we can, social distancing is in place: our student 'bubbles' are being kept separate during the school day to minimise the opportunity for the virus to move between year groups. We therefore have two of these three key measures in place.

At this time, given the Government campaign around Hands, Face, Space the rising cases of Covid 19 and the expected additional national restrictions that will soon be announced, we have reviewed our management procedures and our advice about the wearing of face masks in our schools. I know our parents will hold a wide variety of views about routine use of masks however we must clearly take every possible step to keep our students and staff safe, our schools open, and to avoid any further disruption to our children's education which would inevitably result from school closures.

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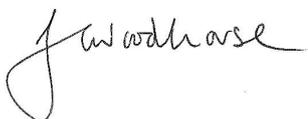
Therefore, students will find increasing numbers of staff wearing masks in corridors and, where necessary, in classrooms. Students are already required to wear a face mask on school transport (unless they are exempt). I would, at this stage, like to gently encourage students to wear masks more regularly whilst in school. Whilst Government guidance has not changed, and corridors are identified as being 'low risk', there are times where movement in corridors slows (at busy junctions, exits and entrances). Wearing a mask in a corridor would therefore seem to be a sensible step we could all take without disrupting children's education. As in our original plan, students and staff may also choose to wear a mask at other times of the school day if they wish to do so. I would like to reassure parents that wearing a face mask is not compulsory in school at this stage and no child will be required to wear one if they are exempt. I know that face masks are uncomfortable when they are worn for long periods, and may impact on our communication and social interactions: both so important in schools. I fully understand that there is a careful balance to be found here: our approach has been carefully considered and, at its heart, takes into account the safety, care and education of our students. Parental support for this small but significant step, which may help to reduce transmission of the virus, would be very much appreciated.

With regards to managing any confirmed cases in the future, our schools will robustly follow the advice from the Department for Education and Public Health teams. Should we have a confirmed case, the advice may mean that we have to ask an identified group of students to be tested and self-isolate or that we could be required to close to a particular bubble (year group). In either of these circumstances, we will do all we can to protect the continuity of education for our students by providing remote learning via our online platforms. Students without online access will receive additional support from the school and our teachers and pastoral teams are prepared and 'ready to go' with our remote education provision and family support. I would like to reassure parents that we will do everything we can to remain open, and that closing to a group of students or a year group will only be done in response to DfE or Public Health advice or where we do not have enough staff available to be able to remain fully open. More details about our emergency school closure procedures will be provided for parents over coming days.

I very much hope that cases within our schools remain low and that our steps to minimise transmission in school and in our communities are effective in keeping us all safe and well. I appreciate that these are difficult and worrying times for our parents and families. Our pastoral support teams continue to provide advice and care for students and can be contacted by parents who have any questions or concerns.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our families and communities for their continued support which is so very much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Woodhouse', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Jan Woodhouse
Executive Headteacher