



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

23 October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

END OF HALF TERM UPDATE – OCTOBER 2020

It has been a long and at times, extremely challenging first half term. This is an academic year like no other and I feel the students have approached these unprecedented times in a mature and diligent way. Overall, I have been delighted with their performance in lessons and their attendance at school. Thank you for your support with this.

I must pay tribute to the magnificent team of staff at Summerhill who have truly gone 'above and beyond' since we returned. Our staff attendance has been outstanding and it is testament to their work that has allowed the students to settle back into the school routine so quickly and conscientiously.

It is quite clear that the national situation with Covid-19 is deteriorating and therefore, it remains vital that we all play our part in preventing community transmission as much as possible. Our actions will impact what happens to our families and the school community as we navigate through to Christmas and beyond.

Covid-19 Update

During half term, it is still imperative that we are made aware of any symptomatic students or positive cases. This is to ensure that the correct students are self-isolating if this is needed. If a member of your household receives a positive test result please email us immediately to info@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk including a mobile phone number so one of our senior staff can call you back.

If your child tests positive or develops symptoms at any point from 3pm today (Friday 23 October) up to and including 3pm on Sunday 1 November 2020, please notify us immediately so that we can activate the contact tracing and alert and advise other students who may have been in contact within this 48 hour period. This WILL result in some students who would have been in contact before school closed for half term.

In addition, if a positive case is confirmed later in the week, it is important that you state on your email whether the symptoms and/or positive test were before or after 8.30am on Saturday 24 October 2020 as this will determine the advice that we would give to other students before they return after half term.

Any students in Year 11 and Year 9 who are currently self-isolating MUST remain at home over half term and return to school on the date of the notification letter. For Year 11, this is Monday 2 November 2020 and for Y9 this is Tuesday 3 November 2020.

Contact Tracing

Our contact tracing is becoming very robust and this is aided by our updated seating plans, information on friendship groups and knowledge about out of school socialising. As the guidance has been updated, to focus on 'close contact', it is now less likely that we would be forced to isolate a whole year group, unless of course, information is slow in being presented to the school, there is evidence to suggest significant socialising outside of school or there is a specific outbreak with a number of cases.

There are a number of questions we will ask to aid our contact tracing. These may include:

- When was the student last in school?
- Have they mixed with anyone in social circles? If yes, when and where?
- If they have socialised, what are the names of every other student who was present? How long did they socialise for and where?
- Who are the student's close friends? Who did they sit with at break time or lunchtime in the 48 hours before symptoms started or before a positive test was taken if asymptomatic?

- Who does the student come to school with? Who did they stand with on entry to school? Were they wearing a face mask?
- How did they get to school? Was there any car sharing, if so, who with?
- When did the symptoms begin? What are the symptoms?
- If no symptoms, when was concern raised about an asymptomatic case?
- Who in the family is positive? When were they tested and when were they positive?
- Can you track where you believe the transmission has come from?
- Has there been any contact with anyone else in the wider community?

Behaviour in the local community

Whilst behaviour in school has been exemplary from the start of term, we have unfortunately, had several members of the public contact us to complain about some student conduct on the way to and from school. This has a tremendously negative impact on the reputation of the school and whilst it is a very small minority of students, it affects the whole perception of our school community. Therefore, can I please ask that you remind your child(ren) that any anti-social or inappropriate behaviour does not go unseen and is very easily recognised due to the nature of our easily identifiable uniform. In recent days, we have had reports of several Year 7 students running and pushing each other in the roads surrounding the school. This is extremely dangerous and any identified students will be sanctioned accordingly.

Student Well-being and Support

Student performance is constantly being monitored and addressed where necessary. Whilst many students have returned to school with that clear drive and determination to do their best, we understand that there are others who are struggling and need that additional care. If you have any specific concerns about your child, please contact us via email to: studentsupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk and you will be contacted by the relevant member of staff.

Social Spaces

As part of our review of our Covid-19 operations, we will be rotating social spaces after half term to ensure that all students have fair access to the indoor and outdoor spaces. Students will remain in their year group bubbles and further information will be issued once we return.

Half Term Socialising

Can I politely remind you that students should not be socialising with each other in large groups during the half term holidays. Whilst I appreciate that this is 'down time' after a very long period of study since September, it is still imperative that we all collectively follow the strict national and local guidance with regard to social interactions and distancing. Any inappropriate social behaviour outside of school will have a massive effect on our day to day operations and the quality of education we are able to provide to our students. Any students who are socialising outside of school and later test positive will cause issues for many other students in their year group. By working together, we can significantly reduce the impact of this.

Up to date contact details

Please ensure that we have your up to date email addresses. Any contact with regard to self-isolation will be sent in this way.

Return to School

School reopens to all students (apart from those who are self-isolating) on Monday 2nd November. **Please remember that face coverings are mandatory when students are on the school site.**

I am sure you will appreciate that we are doing everything possible to ensure that the achievement and progress of our students remains our first and foremost priority. I am very aware that we won't always be able to please everyone all of the time but our decisions are continuously taken in the best interests of the whole school community.

I wish you a very safe half term and thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Palfreyman
Headteacher