



Headteacher: Mr D. Williams
Burton Wood • Weobley
Hereford • HR4 8ST

Tel: 01544 318159 • Fax: 01544 312900
admin@weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk

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Dear parent / carer,

Happy New Year to you all and a warm welcome back to a new term!

We look forward to welcoming the pupils back over the next couple of days and will be carrying out the on-site testing in the sports hall before they return to lessons. Hopefully they will also have been able to test regularly throughout the holidays; home-testing has become absolutely crucial as a measure to tackle the potential spread of cases into school and so this should continue twice-weekly as before. I once again thank you for your support with this.

You may also be aware that there will be a return to pupils wearing face-coverings in classrooms as well as in communal areas and on school transport. I understand that this is a temporary measure which will be reviewed at the end of the month; I will of course keep you abreast of any updates. It will therefore continue to be important for pupils to bring, wear and look after their own face-coverings as well as stick to the usual measures of social-distancing, hand-sanitising and regular home-testing. I am keen to maintain the 'normal' structure and routine of school as much as possible so want pupils to feel reassured that school and in particular, our focus on high-quality teaching and learning, will continue as usual. We do expect staff absences to continue as they did before Christmas however we have been working hard to minimise disruption to learning and will continue to do so.

We have also received a number of queries regarding contacts and self-isolation. Just to clarify, the guidance currently states that pupils who are identified as close contacts of a positive case are no longer required to self-isolate unless they have symptoms or test positive themselves; they should however continue to take a LFD test every day for 7 days. In addition, if a pupil tests positive then they are required to self-isolate for 10 days although this is reduced to 7 days if they test negative on LFD tests on days 6 and 7. There is also a Herefordshire Council 'Back to School Safely' webpage which can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/backtoschool which contains updated guidance for your information.

Thank you once again and I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2022!

Yours sincerely,

Dean Williams