



The Blue Coat School

www.blue-coat.oldham.sch.uk

Proud to be part of the Cranmer Education Trust

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and you families are all safe and well. You have all been in our thoughts and prayers over the last eight weeks.

Can I start by thanking you for your support during this half term. It has been an incredibly challenging time for us all, but it has been wonderful to have the children back at school; to see them engaging in their lessons once again and rebuilding their relationships with their teachers and their peers. I have been incredibly impressed with how the pupils have responded this half term. Their effort and attitude in lessons has been exceptional and it is clear they have all relished returning to school full time.

I have also been impressed by the resilience and maturity that they have demonstrated. As I said at the start of the academic year and also in the Parents' Information Evenings, this term has been back to school for all pupils but it has not been back to school as we know it, and it is still a long way from what we would class as 'normal'. The children have had to adapt. They have had to learn totally different routines and ways of working. They have had to be patient and realise that some things may take longer than usual and may not be as they expected, and they have had to make sacrifices at social time and how they interact with their friends. But, they have done all of this and they have done it without question and with a smile on their faces, which has been heart-warming to see.

When we have had confirmed Covid 19 positive cases, they have also had to endure being told they need to isolate and spend more time away from school. For some pupils regrettably, this has now happened on multiple occasions. We don't underestimate how upsetting and difficult this is for the children and for you as a family, but unfortunately this is something that we are all going to have to get used to for some time to come yet. Despite the challenges of working from home that many of our young people have experienced, their level of engagement and the quality of work they have produced has been outstanding. Naturally, some pupils and families will find this harder than others, but everyone has done what they can, and we have been able to monitor and support those pupils who may need that little bit of extra help.

It has been a challenging half term, but it has also been a great one! The children are happy, they are engaged in their learning and they are making good progress. We should all be proud of the start our young people have made to the academic year. It has not been easy for them, but they have responded incredibly. This doesn't just happen. It relies on the hard work and constant support from staff but also on the support from you as parents. So, I thank you once again for all the effort, and undoubtedly the sacrifices, you have had to make in the current climate to support our young people in their learning and education.



Moving forward and looking to the other side of half term now.

It is clear that the virus is still prevalent in the community and if anything, it is increasing at the moment. We are going to be faced with exactly the same challenges next half term as we have in this one. Unfortunately, there will be times where we have to send cohorts of Year groups home to isolate, when we are informed about a positive case in the Year group – with current guidance it is simply unavoidable. We can however try and limit the amount of time our young people spend out of school if we all take responsibility and follow the guidance.

Please communicate with us. If your child or anyone else in your family has symptoms or is going for a test, please let us know. The more we know in advance, the more we can prepare. For any Covid related illness or concerns please use this link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=v4fq2raVOE668tA9PQrgMz15OxD9h_IPpLEICbNA579UQ1Q2S05XWUs2SFFOQ1pQWUFWRTNQMUY4UiQIQCN0PWcu

This is monitored by members of the Senior Leadership Team over weekends and it will continue to be monitored over half term.

Regrettably, some of the cases we have had in school which have required large cohorts of children to be sent home would have been avoidable if the guidance had been followed. I must reiterate, if anyone in the family home develops symptoms or goes for a test, then the entire family **must** isolate immediately until a negative test is returned. Even if you think it's just a cold and are going for a test as a precaution, you **must not** send your son/daughter to school. If your son/daughter has been in close contact with anyone who has tested positive for coronavirus or if they are identified as a close contact, then they **must** stay at home and isolate.

I understand that the thought of keeping your son/daughter off school for a couple of days as a precaution may seem difficult, but it is essential. It is also much better than up to 80 children having to miss two weeks off school and self-isolate. We have **all got to take responsibility for this** and do our bit to look after each other and our young people.

To remind you all of the current guidance, the main symptoms of Coronavirus are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature),
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual),
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

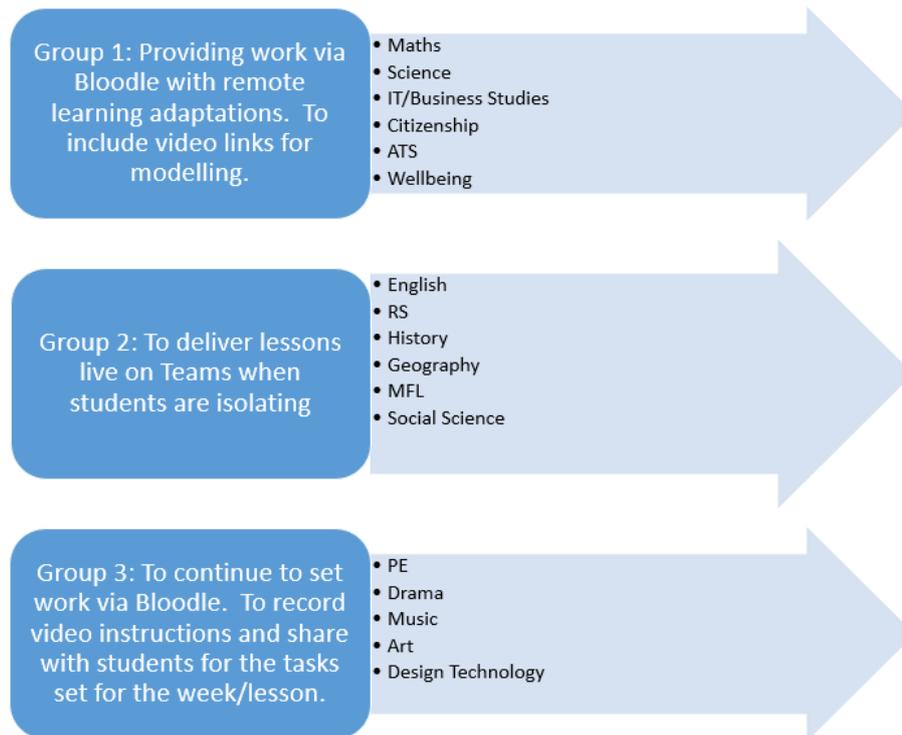
Please also ensure that you follow the guidance that is attached to this letter.

Remote Learning - So far, we have been using Bloodle to set our remote learning work when we have to send a cohort of children home to isolate. We use Bloodle because it's much easier to track and monitor the engagement of pupils than any other available platforms. It also encourages the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and apply it, which leads to deeper knowledge, understanding and greater learning. However, as the pandemic continues and shows no signs of ending soon, we will change our approach to remote learning after half term to give the pupils more variety. Bloodle has worked well so far, but if our young people are forced to spend more time at home over the next few months, we need to find different ways of keeping them engaged in their learning.



After half term, when we have to send a cohort of children home to isolate, remote learning will be as follows:

- All Key Stage 5 lessons will be streamed live by Microsoft Teams. The pupils can either join the lesson live or will be able to watch a recording of the lesson at a later time.
- At Key Stage 3 and 4, we will be using a blended approach to learning and the platforms we use will reflect the needs of the subject. We are also using a blended approach to provide variety and to avoid the pupils working at a computer for five hours a day. Remote learning for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils will be set as follows:



We will be training the pupils to use Microsoft Teams after half term and there will also be a how to guide for parents and pupils on Bloodle. In subjects where live lessons are being provided, pupils will either be able to join them live or watch a recording at a later time.

These are the approaches we will use when we have to send a cohort of pupils home due to a confirmed case in the Year group. Where pupils must isolate because they or another family member are ill or awaiting a test result, we will continue to provide access to lessons and resources on Bloodle, so that they can keep up with their learning.

Parents' Evenings - We are still committed to providing a Parents' Evening for every Year group this year. The format of these will largely depend upon the restrictions at the time and when we have more details, we will share them with you. We will not be able to hold any Parents' Evenings until at least after Christmas. We simply do not have the capacity or the resource to do so at present. We had provisionally calendared Year 7 and Year 13 Parents' Evenings for next half term but for understandable reasons, we will need to move these to later in the year. All Year groups will receive a report that will be sent home this term.



Speech Night - We will be unable to proceed with Speech Night this year. Speech Night is the evening in the year where we celebrate the achievements of our young people and acknowledge those who have received awards in the different subject areas. Although we will not be able to proceed with the event, we will still be acknowledging the individual prize winners. Letters will be sent home to all award winners and we will also display the prize list on Bloodle.

Keeping up to date - Normally we produce a monthly newsletter to celebrate the successes of our pupils and to highlight all the wonderful experiences and opportunities they have had. With the current restrictions on what we can offer in school, we are going to move this to a termly newsletter for an interim period. There are still a wealth of activities taking place in school however, so I would encourage you to follow us on twitter (@BCOldham), which is where we regularly showcase the work and achievements of our young people.

Finally - It has been a challenging half term, but we have achieved so much. We have managed to get all 1,750 pupils back to school and to do it safely. The pupils have been a credit to us all. They are embraced in, and enjoying their learning and making the most of all the opportunities they are being provided with.

We know the next half term is not going to be without challenge, but we know what we are doing and have a plan for whatever is thrown at us next! It is important that we continue to work together and support everyone in our school community by following the guidance and strictly adhering to it – just one family not doing so can have huge consequences for so many of our young people and their families.

I leave you with the verse our Chaplin shared with our staff at the end of term.

*"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life".
John (Chapter 8:12)*

I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable half term together as a family.

Yours sincerely,



Mr R. Higgins
Headteacher
The Blue Coat School



COVID-19 (coronavirus) absence: A quick guide for parents / carers

What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p>...my child has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Child should get a test • Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result • Inform school immediately about test results 	<p>...when child's test comes back negative provided they have been fever free for the 48 hours before returning to school, and feel well</p>
 <p>...my child tests positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Child self-isolates for at least 10 days from when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) • Inform school immediately about test results • Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i> 	<p>...after 10 days, once child feels better, and has been fever-free for at least 48 hours</p> <p>They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell / taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.</p>
 <p>...somebody in my household has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Household member with symptoms should get a test • Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result • Inform school immediately about test results 	<p>...when household member test is negative, and child does not have COVID-19 symptoms*</p>
 <p>...somebody in my household has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i> 	<p>...when child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during the 14 days</p>

Symptoms include at least one of a high temperature; a new continuous cough; a loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste. ¹

See more at: [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms)

What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p>...NHS Test and Trace has identified my child as a 'close contact' of a confirmed COVID-19 (coronavirus) case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Child self-isolates for 14 days (as advised by NHS Test and Trace) – even if they test negative during those 14 days • Rest of household does not need to self-isolate, unless they are a 'close contact' too 	<p>...when the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during those 14 days</p>
 <p>...we / my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not take unauthorised leave in term time • Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel • Provide information to school as per attendance policy <p>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Whole household self-isolates for 14 days – even if they test negative during those 14 days 	<p>...when the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed for the child, even if they test negative during those 14 days</p>
 <p>...we have received advice from a medical / official source that my child must resume shielding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shouldn't attend school • Contact school as advised by attendance officer / pastoral team • Child should shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again 	<p>...when school / other agencies inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again</p>
 <p>....I am not sure who should get a test for COVID -19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only people with symptoms* need to get a test • People without symptoms are not advised to get a test, even if they are a 'close contact' of someone who tests positive 	<p>...when conditions above, as matching your situation, are met</p>

If anyone in your household has symptoms*, book a free COVID-19 test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or call [119](tel:119)

For further information visit [gov.uk/backtoschool](https://www.gov.uk/backtoschool)

