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Dear Parents and Carers

RE: Autumn Term Update

It seems like only a few minutes ago that I was writing to you at the end of the summer holiday about the plans for this term. We are now seven weeks into the term and it feels like it has gone by in a flash. This will be down to the fact that after a couple of years of disruption, we are able to do the things that COVID restrictions would not allow us to do. Your children, our students, have been brilliant in the way that they have engaged with all the opportunities that they have had since the start of term and it has been great to see how they have really involved themselves in the life of the academy.

COVID-19 Update: As you will no doubt be aware there has been a growing number of positive COVID cases across the country. Whilst we have not completely avoided this the number of positive cases in the academy have been comparatively low to other schools and academies around the country. With the changes to the NHS Test and Trace system, I am grateful for the notification that parents have given about both confirmed and potential positive cases as this helps us to manage the situation around COVID in the academy. Yesterday evening Norfolk County Council (NCC) sent a communication to all schools in the county to highlight the increase in the number of cases. Whilst the cases within Norfolk at this present time, have not required any additional interventions, they are mindful of what is happening in adjoining counties including Suffolk where there have been significant increases in the number of positive cases. Again, whilst we are not being asked at this stage to make any changes to our day to day protocols they are updating this advice regularly and have suggested that we may need to take action after the half term break should the increase in cases continue. I stress that the actions we would be looking at in the first instance would be ones that we can easily control and have minimum impact on the day to day experience that our students have, but could include the re-introduction of the mandatory wearing of face coverings as well as limiting the number of visitors into the academy.

Two aspects that NCC have asked us to highlight are the vaccination programme and the regular home testing of students. You will have received recent communication about the opportunity for your children to be vaccinated in the academy. If you wish to take this up, please complete the appropriate online consent forms. We will host the vaccination team early in November to administer the vaccines to students whose parents have consented, but we are not involved in the management of this process.

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As a result, if you have any questions about the programme you will need to contact the Vaccination Team directly. Equally, if consent is not given students will not be able to be vaccinated on the day that the team are in. If students are unable to have their vaccination on this day then follow up appointments can be made through your local GP Surgery. NCC and the health authorities are also encouraging students to continue to regularly test themselves. We continue to issue testing kits to those who want them (although they are freely available directly from the NHS) and recommend that students test themselves twice a week. We would also ask that, if able, students continue to do this through the half term break and conduct a test either the evening before or the morning of the day we return to the academy on Monday 1 November.

Whilst we continue to adapt and adjust to the demands that COVID puts on our lives we will do all we can to limit the impact on our student's education.

Social Media: Whilst there has been much to be positive about through the start of the term, one aspect that seems to have raised its head through the last few weeks are issues over social media. There can be many positives to social media and how it can be used but we have seen a few issues that have been caused by students misuse of it. Whilst all the incidents that have been brought to our attention have originated outside of the academy day, we are mindful that there can be repercussions in the academy and we have intervened where we can. We have reinforced to students the appropriateness of the use of social media and also the legal implications about who should and can be using different platforms based on their ages. Whilst we can try and do this in the academy, we would ask for your support in checking any accounts that your children have to ensure that they are using them both appropriately and legally. In doing so, if you do find anything that does concern you, please do let us know and we will endeavour to do what we can to support.

Free School Meal Vouchers: Just to make families whose children are entitled to free school meals aware, Norfolk County Council are again supporting the voucher scheme that has been in operation during previous holidays for this half term. Parents and carers of students who are entitled to a free school meal, will receive a voucher from the usual provider, Edenred, at the start of the half term break via email. This can be claimed in the same way that vouchers have been claimed in previous holidays.

As I referred to at the start of this letter there has been lots that has gone on in the academy this half term. It has been brilliant to see our students back properly in the academy and engaging in the way that they have. You will hopefully have seen via our newsletter all the great things that have been happening and all the things that our students have been doing. There is already lots planned for the next half term and, COVID allowing, I hope that we can continue to see our students get involved in all the excellent things that are happening.

I hope that you and your families keep safe and have a good half term break.

Kind regards.



Mr M. Woodhouse
Principal