

Dear Parents and Carers

As we come out of a second national lockdown and the festive season approaches, I wanted to write with a few updates and reminders.

Tier 2

All of Devon is now under Tier 2 restrictions. This means no one is allowed to socialise indoors with others from a different household. Whilst these restrictions may be disappointing, it is really important that we all try to keep infection rates down until a full vaccination programme is in place.

With any cases of coronavirus in our student population, the college has responsibility for all contact tracing. The 'Test and Trace' service does not operate for school children; instead it falls to us, operating under the guidance of the local public health team, to identify contacts and inform parents of the need to self-isolate. What has become apparent in doing this is that transmission is not, so far, happening in school; the cases we are dealing with are from within families and the community. It is therefore particularly concerning that we are still hearing of sleepovers, parties and social gatherings that are not permitted under the lockdown or Tier 2 legislation. It is incumbent on all of us to make sacrifices to protect the most vulnerable members of society and my plea to you as parents is to ensure that your children are sticking to the guidance in order to protect others.

Christmas Holidays

The guidance for the Christmas period allows for up to three households to form a 'Christmas bubble' who can meet inside a private home between 23 and 27 December. The local health protection team have stressed that caution should still be taken, and that Christmas socialising prior to meeting more elderly or vulnerable relatives should be avoided. The Government's Christmas Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-the-christmas-period>

We will do all we can to limit contacts within bubbles in college in the final week of term, to try and prevent anyone having to self-isolate over Christmas. Assemblies will be held virtually and we will further adapt the PE curriculum and adapt practical lessons where possible to reduce contacts. We are still having to remind students daily that unnecessary contact such as hugging each other needs to pause for the time being, and your support in reinforcing the importance of reducing contacts would be very much appreciated.

Seasonal Celebrations

I'm very conscious that the college's role in public health protection means that my letters to parents are very focused on rules and regulations; I am starting to feel like the Grinch! We do want the students to enjoy the festive season this year so Year Groups will be having various socially-distanced competitions and prizes with a Christmas theme. We obviously cannot have our usual Christmas Fayre for charity this year because of social distancing restrictions but we will have a non-uniform day on Friday 18th December. We ask for a £1 donation to charity on this day if possible, and students may come to college in their own clothes with a festive theme. Please don't feel you have to buy a Christmas jumper especially for this. Students can make their outfit seasonal in any way they wish. We just ask that clothing is appropriate for school, i.e. no hot-pants, crop tops, offensive slogans etc...

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our families for your support over what has been the most challenging year I have ever known in teaching. Your goodwill has meant a lot to the staff at the college and your support whilst we all got to grips with remote teaching, key worker provisions and online meetings has been invaluable.

I hope you all manage to enjoy some family time this holiday and that you have a happy, if quiet, Christmas. Let's all hope that 2021 brings about a return to all the things that we have missed in 2020. As a reminder, the new term starts on **Wednesday 6 January** for students.

With warmest wishes for a wonderful Christmas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Newton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex Newton
Principal