



Picture by Rebecca Mitchell

December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Well what a year 2020 has turned out to be! As we approach the end of term I wanted to write to all of you to reflect on the autumn term and provide some information about what is coming up.

Arrangements for the end of term

Firstly, information for the end of term: School closes to pupils on **Friday 18th December at the earlier time of 1:15pm**. Lessons will continue to take place throughout the final week, until Wednesday lunchtime (16th December) with rewards events on Wednesday afternoon, end of term activities and fun sessions will then take place on Thursday and Friday morning with a full school assembly via zoom on the last day of term. The assembly will be delivered on a Google meet for pupils to watch in Form rooms or at home if isolating, rather than all together in the Sports Hall as usual.

Positive cases in the holidays

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 at the start of the holidays, and has been in school during the 48 hours prior to the start of symptoms or the test, then we do need to know. Unfortunately 'track and trace,' do not deal with school contacts, this is something school is expected to do. So if you do have positive test results, please email the school on reception@aldergrange.com or on my email below. We do not have staff in school during the holidays so the telephone will not be answered and I will send emails to close contacts if there are any.

Celebrating achievements this term

We have been really impressed with the attitudes of all pupils since September, they have adapted to changes in rules and wearing masks brilliantly. It has been great to have classrooms full of children after the long lockdown of spring and summer.

As the term has progressed we have seen positive cases emerge, among staff and pupils and the impact on school increase. It has been incredibly frustrating to get pupils back in, only to start sending groups home again, and we have tried to minimise this by only sending close contacts home wherever possible. We have been pleased at how little spread within school there has been, the majority of cases appear to have been caused by contact outside of home, and it has been rare for close contacts in school to subsequently test positive.

It has also been really pleasing to see how well those having to isolate have adapted to online learning again, and our use of Google Classroom has gone from strength to strength. I would like to thank all pupils for their hard work and excellent attitudes this term and all the staff in school for working tirelessly to adapt to new routines and new ways of working. It has been exhausting for all of us.

Despite the restrictions, tiers and lockdowns we have been delighted to return to a sort of normal for pupils, and have had much to celebrate this term. I have had numerous hot chocolates with pupils from all year groups, and we continue to congratulate them each week. Our year 8/9 girls football team are national trophy winners, Isabelle Greenwood in year 11 was nominated for the Enterprising Young person award at the Rossendale Business Awards, the school radio re-launched and has been broadcasting on Friday lunchtimes, and we are going to be celebrating the achievements of last year's year 11 and 13 in video versions of the presentation evening next week, to name but a few highlights.

Exams season 2021

As parents of pupils in year 11 and 13 will undoubtedly be aware, there is now confirmation that the exams planned for summer 2021 will definitely take place. We know there will be some changes to papers and to what pupils can take in to exams. Details are due to be published in January, and I will be in touch then to let you know what is happening. In the meantime, I was delighted with how well year 11 performed in mock exams this month, and this will serve as excellent preparation for the summer.

Similarly year 13 had early mocks this term, and a full season is taking place after Christmas. Year 11 will have an additional mock season in February to further support learning. Revision classes and catch up have begun and we launched Saturday revision in November. This will resume in January, and provides pupils in year 11 with subject support from core subjects and some option subjects alongside study skills sessions and support with revision. We hope to extend this to year 10 next term – more details in the New Year.

Start of new term

School returns on Monday 4th January 2021 at the normal time, and I would like to take this moment to remind you of the need for full school uniform to be worn, and masks to be carried at all times. Any Christmas nails should be removed before the start of term and leggings should not be worn instead of, or underneath skirts, for example. Full details of uniform expectations are in the pupil planner and on the website.

Thank you

Finally I would like to thank all of you for the support during this term, the communication from parents has been overwhelmingly positive and supportive, and I really appreciate the on-going open dialogue. As ever, my email address is below for any comments or queries you wish to make.

I hope you all have a well-earned rest and happy festive break, and that you are all able to spend some quality family time together. Here's hoping for a less disrupted 2021 and even greater return to normal routines. Stay safe and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Jo Griffiths

Headteacher

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