



The Howard School



A Specialist Sports College
"To Strive and Achieve is to Succeed"

14th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you

We know that this is and has been an extremely challenging time for our students and their families. We genuinely appreciate that students and families have worked with us to make the very best out of this difficult situation.

Thank you for your vigilance in keeping students at home where necessary and for your communication with us. This has enabled us to take swift action when needed and it is keeping our school community as safe as possible.

We are currently dealing with a continually changing picture with staffing, with both teachers and support staff having to self-isolate at any time, due to test and trace alerts. Thank you for your continued understanding in relation to this.

The end of term up until the 23rd December 2020

I have been asked by some parents why we do not move to Remote Learning, given that this was highly successful during our two week circuit break.

We cannot make teachers available in Google Classroom now we are back in school. We do provide work via Knowledge Organisers and Google Classroom, but teachers will rarely be in Google Classroom, because they are teaching and covering for absent colleagues.

The government has clearly stated that schools must remain open and they cannot choose to move to go to Remote Learning.

'It remains vital for all children to be in school up to the last day of teaching.'

We also want to remain open, if it is safe to do so and manage this situation as best we can. Therefore, we continue to be in school as usual until Friday 18th December.

'Public Health England has agreed a 6 day window after the final day of teaching in which schools and further education providers are asked to remain contactable so they can assist with contact tracing where necessary.'

We would ask that until December 23rd, if you receive a positive test result for your child **at any time** please can you email office@thehowardschool.co.uk rather than phoning the school, as the school office will be closed over the two week break.

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Christmas Jumpers and wearing non- school clothes

Year 7 will have the opportunity to wear their own clothes and ideally a Christmas jumper on Wednesday 16.12.20 and every other year group will have the same opportunity on Friday 18.12.20. We ask that students donate £1 and then we will divide this money between 'The Oliver Fisher Special care baby trust' and the large outdoor structure we want to buy, which will allow our students comfort and social distancing. These shelters cost around £40,000.

January 2021

From January we will allow slightly more movement of students, ensuring that students can access specialised rooms and specialist areas. We will simultaneously place students back into ability groups, rather than broad ability form classes. This allows students more flexibility to access specialist subjects, and to have access to an improved and broader educational experience.

We currently have years 9-11 moving for their option subjects and we have successfully added movement for year 8 this term. This is an extension of what is already happening. The Trust Health and Safety Lead has risk assessed, checked and reviewed our new one way systems and robust planning for January 2021.

This is in accordance with government guidance which says:

“School leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk”

We are providing students with more curriculum opportunities and we will ensure via careful planning and one-way systems, that students continue to safely access learning. All our other covid regimes remain exactly the same and we are copying the model used in most Medway secondary schools. Please see the link to information that is on our website about this:

[file:///N:/Downloads/Return%20to%20classroom%20\(3\).pdf](file:///N:/Downloads/Return%20to%20classroom%20(3).pdf)

We have designated stairwells for two specific year groups and students will pass briskly in masks. This will only be for a very short period of time, as per government guidance:

“While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk”

In summary:

- Start of day and school finish times will continue to be staggered by year group
- Break and lunch time will continue to be staggered by year group
- Year group access to the canteen will continue to be staggered
- Year groups will continue to go to zoned play areas to avoid mixing during break and lunch
- Enhanced one way systems to travel around the school site
- New entry & exit protocols to blocks / classrooms
- Classroom cleaning protocols at the end of every lesson will remain in place
- Staff will return to their own classrooms, this will significantly improve the quality of teaching and delivery of the curriculum, particularly in specialist subjects

- Students must follow the outdoor one way system when moving between blocks
- Students must wear face coverings in all corridors and stairwells when moving between lessons
- Students must follow the guidance on entry and exit points for every block / classroom
- When in corridors or stairwells everyone will adopt a “keep left” protocol to ensure safe and quick movement when travelling
- Staff will be on duty at key locations in all areas of the school during lesson changeovers to supervise the safe movement of students

Examinations this year

The government has said that pupils in England will take examinations next summer and will be given advance notice of topics and allowed exam aids, including formula sheets. We have been told that students will be awarded more generous grades, in line with last summer’s improved national results. Grades awarded will have a “similar profile” to those given last year, to reflect the disrupted learning faced by students. Details of exam topics are due to be released in January to enable schools to make best use of teaching time and focus revision. Vocational and technical qualifications will be adapted to ensure parity, the DfE have said. When we have more details about this, we will share them with you.

Rewards at The Howard School

I am very pleased to inform you that Mr Knights has been appointed to lead on Rewards at The Howard School.

Every student from year 7-11 has been placed in one of the five new Houses. Students know that their House Points contribute to the House Points Competition which is an event that runs throughout the year. The more Championship points a House wins throughout the year, the higher chance of them being crowned Howard School House Champions.

The first House Event was House Art; working with the Art department we asked year 7, 8 and 9 students to design the crests for the five new Houses: Attenborough, Hawking, Pankhurst, Tull and Turing. As of today, the five crest designs have been chosen.

Two sporting events were due to take place this term: House Volleyball and House Table Tennis. Both events needed to be postponed, for Covid related reasons, but they will take place in Term three. A House FIFA Competition is taking place this week for Year 7.

Throughout term one, the form in each year group with the most House Points in a week were recognised with the title of 'Form of the Week'. At the end of the term, the form who had received the title of 'Form of the Week' most often were rewarded with a free breakfast from the canteen. The winning forms were: 7W1, 8H1, 9T1, 10T5, 11T2. Unfortunately due to the nature of Term two, Form of the Week has currently paused. This will be picked back up in Term three.

Our School dog Tāne

The Howard school would like to introduce our newest member of the school community, our trainee therapy and school dog Tāne (Tar-nay). Tāne is a puppy and is at the beginning of his training to become an effective member of the school community.

After much research it was decided that a working breed is the best breed of dog for this role, due to their high intelligence and trainability. It was also decided that a puppy who lives with a member of staff and their family would be ideal.

The top priority has been to ensure that the temperament of the breed and the parents is suitable for interaction with students. This resulted in choosing a Sprollie, a cross between a springer spaniel and a border collie. These working breeds are highly intelligent, have a mild temperament, have easy trainability, eager to please and are emotionally receptive to people. Tāne's parents were both working dogs themselves and are excellent with children and other animals. Tāne is being raised in a family home with two children, aged 9 and 12, so is already accustomed to being around young people.

It is accepted that interacting with dogs is not appropriate for all young people, but that for some it has the potential to provide many positive benefits. Any parent/carer who does not want their child to interact with the dog is invited to write to inform the school of their wishes at office@thehowardschool.co.uk. The risk assessment will be reviewed regularly and the impact of a school dog will be evaluated by the school Leadership Team.

Students can benefit both educationally and emotionally through contact and interactions with a dog. A school dog can increase students' understanding of responsibility, as well as help to develop empathy and nurturing skills. Dogs have been used to help young people overcome adversity or to improve their emotional wellbeing.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

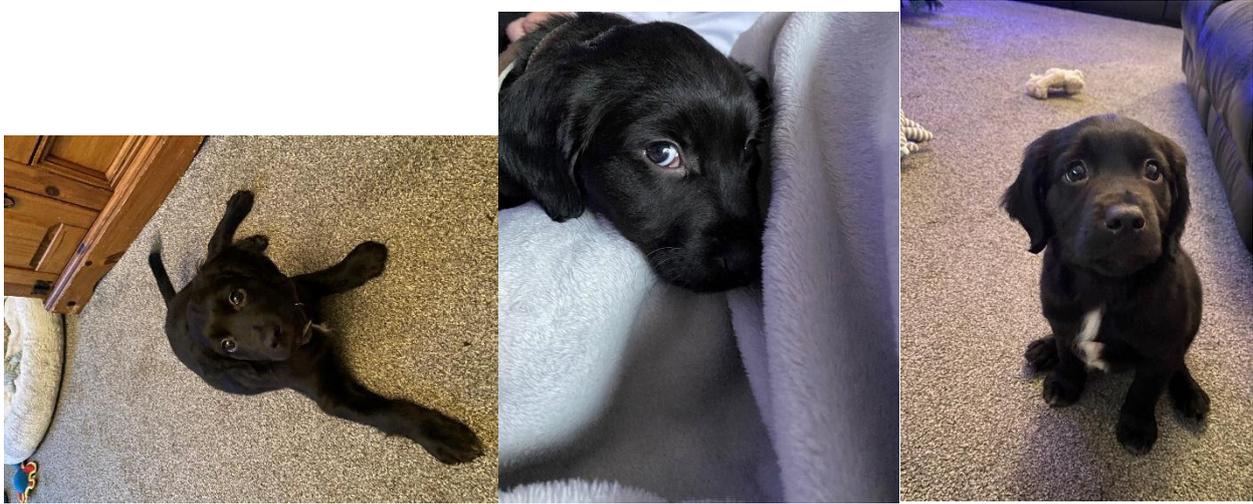
This is just another risk that needs to be managed. We believe that through a rigorous risk assessment process the risk can be managed by school staff.

Who owns/looks after the dog?

The dog is owned by Mr Webb and he is with a loving family who have a lot of experience with dogs.

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

Yes, we have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that successfully already have a school dog.



Finally, on behalf of all the staff, I would like to wish you and your families all the best during this festive break.

Ms C Reid
Executive Headteacher