

# HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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*A Church of England School  
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Update Letter – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

I hope that this letter finds you all well. We are, once again, in the strangest of times – this time with a war raging that most of us never envisaged being possible. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people involved in the conflict in Ukraine and we are particularly mindful that some of our families have direct links with both Ukraine and Russia. We are also aware that some of our students are finding this further situation of uncertainty and threat to be of great concern. It is at times like these that we hold our families and friends close, we appreciate each other and our immediate communities and we have faith that all will be well. If you need any support or if you are affected by this conflict and need someone to talk to ... please contact us.

## World Book Day

Our World Book Day celebrations last week were a real antidote to the scary world events. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to think about their favourite books and characters with some amazing costumes:



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Miss A Stewart

Assistant Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo: Mrs J Davies – Senior Leader: Mr James Ulph

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The ever-popular and hotly-contested World Book Day Door challenge returned to Holywell and, again, students and tutors worked incredibly hard to create some inventive versions of famous book covers.



The Year 8 English prefects chose the winners from Years 5, 6 and 7 and I had the pleasure of judging the Year 8 doors (the Year 8 prefects were a 'tad' biased!!). Winners were 5DS, 6AJ, 7CSM and 8SWM.



### **Readiness for Learning**

As life slowly returns to something a bit more normal, we are taking the opportunity to re-focus on some basics. Our first focus is on EQUIPMENT! As part of our readiness for learning, the following items of essential and non-negotiable equipment need to be brought to every lesson:

- A handwriting pen
- A green, red, blue and black pen.
- A whiteboard pen.
- A pencil.
- A ruler.
- A pencil case.
- A reading book
- The school organiser.

We recommend that students also have the following: a glue stick, coloured pencils, rubber, calculator, a water bottle and a mini-whiteboard (we provided all students with mini whiteboards at the start of the year ... and there is a mini-whiteboard at the back of the organiser). From next Monday, we will be rewarding students who consistently have this basic equipment each lesson through our house point system and we'll be following up on anyone without this equipment. We'll be checking equipment in tutor time and in lessons, so students need to be prepared (with some extras in their pencil case too!). *If anyone needs help acquiring any of this equipment, please let us know.*

Other areas on which students need to focus range from wearing the correct uniform (including wearing the correct PE kit) to self-regulating and being kind.

Attendance is also an area of focus. We try to be considerate and compassionate in how we deal with attendance issues, however, we have had to issue some warning letters and fines. These are generated when specific thresholds are met and we are required to issue these in line with DfE guidance.

## Covid-19 practices and precautions

Although our current case numbers amongst students has decreased significantly, we are currently experiencing a high number of members of staff who have either had a positive case or who have had to stay at home to look after children who are positive. We try to cover these absences as best we can and we have been supported well by staff in school and through our regular supply agency – Simply Education.

As Covid-19 is still in the community, we continue to have the following in place:

- Hand-sanitising at the start of every lesson.
- Wiping down tables in rooms with a high volume of different classes.
- Year groups kept separate.
- Use of different areas / spaces at break and lunchtime.
- A one-way system around the site.
- Ventilation.
- Optional face-coverings (still recommended for use on the school bus).

We appreciate that there are different beliefs and thoughts about whether these measures help to prevent the spread of the virus and we respect those views. As a result, some students do not support these mitigations. We take our advice and viewpoint from Public Health and these are all mitigations which they recommend. Every additional mitigation reduces the risk of spreading the virus.



We have had a few requests for advice on what to do if a student tests positive for Covid-19. The guidance and advice are still the same ... only the legal requirement to self-isolate has been removed. So, if a student tests positive for Covid-19, we request that they stay at home and remain in self-isolation for at least 5 days (Day 0 is the day of the actual test or when someone started having Covid-19 symptoms). On the 5<sup>th</sup> day, they can take a lateral-flow test and, if negative, they can repeat this on Day 6. After 2 negative tests, they can return to school (on the day of the second negative test). This may well take longer than 5-6 days.

### Careers Week

The theme this year is YOU – whatever you want to be is up to YOU.  
Think about what you like to do and design a future that makes you feel like you belong – wherever, however, doing what YOU dream of.

You are important.  
You have value and worth.  
Be confident to be the person you want to be.

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## Careers Week

This week is National Careers Week. Mrs Gough has put together a full programme of visits, tasks and discussions. Students are being encouraged to ask adults at home to describe their career paths (whether this may be a long and winding path or a straight-forward path). Staff will also be discussing careers with the students and it would be a good opportunity for students to find out more about the people who teach them. We have had special careers presentations to students and tomorrow, there is a focussed discussion planned for tutor time.

## Update re: return to school after Easter

Please note that in the last newsletter and on the website, there was an error re: return date after Easter. This has now been corrected. Students **return to school on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

## Thank you

Thank you for your continued support in these challenges these troubling times. Remember to keep talking, practise patience and never suffer in silence – give us a call – we might not be able to resolve everything, but we are here to listen and support.

Best wishes

Mike Simpson  
Headteacher