



THANK YOU

Thank you for your incredibly generous support during our fundraising week for Black Country Women’s Aid. Your generosity has supported a charity which we think very highly of and who have offered help to a number of our parents.

The collection tins that we shook on the playground every day were sealed units so we do not know how much we raised yet, but I will update you as soon as we find out.

NOTHING CHANGES!

When we came back after the summer I was very reluctant to relax the controls we had put in place to try to reduce the risk of spreading illness. I am extremely grateful to the very greatest majority of parents for understanding my decision. I have continued to monitor daily COVID infection and mortality rates but I cannot imagine that any of you have missed the latest news that matters do not seem to be improving. It will come as no surprise to you that, in terms of school organisation, **nothing will change after half term** – children will remain in bubbles and have designated playground spaces; visitors will be kept to a minimum; the one-way system around the site will remain in place etc. If anything is to change before Christmas, the likelihood is that it will be to put additional controls in place, not relax what we currently do.

I am very well aware that some parents feel that my decision in September to keep controls in place, particularly regarding keeping the one-way system, just makes life awkward for no good reason. Nevertheless, it is my responsibility to try to keep everyone on site as risk-free as practicable. It is more than possible that you still feel the same way and may continue to choose to walk the “wrong” way around the site. All I can do is ask you to reconsider and understand that most organisations have felt this to be a reasonable measure to take. At the moment, I do not confront those who walk against the flow on a daily basis and, if I am honest, it is unlikely that this will change – there are enough challenges to address on any normal day, so all I can do is to ask you to reconsider.

Once again, thank you to everyone who has understood and accepted our controls and particularly to those of you who have actively shown your support.

Attendance

Many of your children will be bringing home certificates for 100% attendance this half term. Thank you for ensuring that your children have been in school and therefore been able to make the most of every opportunity to catch up what has been lost over the past 2 years. This is a thank you to everyone who has done their utmost, even if there has been an unavoidable absence.

If your child has been forced to isolate, you may be relieved to know that the government have issued new instructions on how we code this absence if we have proof of a positive test. This means that they may well be bringing home a 100% attendance certificate unexpectedly!

Holidays during term time

Whilst I understand the many reasons why families may consider taking a holiday during term time, I urge you not to do this. Regardless of any action which may be taken by the Attendance & Prosecution Service, please consider the ongoing impact to your child’s learning when they have had so much disruption already.

WINTER IS COMING

(Apologies for any unintentional reference to a certain TV series)

I need to start with another note of gratitude – thank you for your increasingly apparent common sense regarding children being out and about in all weathers. Thank you for understanding that children will get wet sometimes (less so with appropriate footwear and coats), but they are usually fairly resilient and children will sometimes take their coats off when they are running around at playtime – it just means that they are having fun and getting some exercise.

On a slightly different note, I want to avoid any potential bad feeling by explaining why doors do not open “early” if it is tipping down with rain. Quite simply, they already open 10 minutes early – school does not officially start until 8:55am but I ask that staff give up 10 minutes of their time on a daily basis to ensure that the start of school is more flexible for those parents who need to see children safely to different doors. Gates opening at 8:30 offers a little more flexibility but this does not mean that parents have to queue up in the rain for 15 minutes. As long as your child has walked through their door by 8:55, they will be on time for school which means that allowing a couple of minutes to get from the gate to their door, no-one needs to wait around in the rain if they arrive between 8:45am (when doors open) and 8:55am (when school officially starts and doors close).

KEY DATES

Monday 25 th October to Friday 29 th October	Half Term
Monday 20 th December to Monday 3 rd January	Christmas Holiday
Tuesday 4 th January	Training Day – School closed to pupils.
Wednesday 5 th January	Pupils return to school
Friday 18 th February	Training Day – School closed to pupils.
Monday 21 st February to Friday 25 th February	Half Term
Monday 11 th April to Friday 22 nd April	Easter Holiday
Monday 25 th April	Pupils return to school
Monday 2 nd May	May Day Bank Holiday – school closed
Thursday 5 th May	Polling day to be confirmed
Friday 6 th May	Training Day – School closed to pupils.
Monday 30 th May to Friday 3 rd June	Half Term
Friday 22 nd July	Bank Holiday (Queen’s Platinum Jubilee – in lieu) to be confirmed
Monday 25 th July to Friday 2 nd September	Summer Holiday