



Striving for Excellence

Cirencester Kingshill School

Head: Christine S. Oates

22nd January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you are all managing to keep safe and well. We have continued this week, to receive some very positive feedback from within the school community, about how well lessons are going on Microsoft Teams. This has been very well received by teachers who are working exceptionally hard to try and ensure that their lessons are engaging and beneficial learning environments. We have also had some helpful feedback from parents and carers relating to areas that have not perhaps worked quite as well. This too helps us, as we try and continue our development in this new world of online teaching.

And new it still is, for both pupils and staff. This is still such a different way of teaching and learning, and we remain very proud of the resilience and kindness that is being shown when things have not gone quite right, or when things feel a bit trickier. We are all in this together, and I am confident that as a result of the level of support shown at home, in classes between pupils, and with teaching staff, we will come out of this national lockdown a much tighter knit community than we were before.

In-School Learning

We are currently offering in-school learning for vulnerable children and children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). We are also able to offer places for the children of critical workers.

We have a significant number of pupils who are accessing school in person, and numbers continue to steadily rise. In order for us to follow current government advice relating to social distancing and to ensure that a safe learning environment is possible, please can we ask all parents and carers to also follow the guidance issued by the government, and to 'keep their children home if they can'.

We would expect most secondary school age children in Y9 and above, to be able to work from home (unless they are vulnerable or have an EHCP and have been asked to be in school). They will be doing the same work in school as their peers who are learning from home, and accessing lessons online. If you do have a genuine need to access a school space, please contact Mr Pritchard, Deputy Head, to discuss further.

Remote Learning

Children who are not currently in school should be accessing the remote learning offered on Microsoft Teams by their teachers. This will be a mixture of learning with live elements, and work to be completed independently. Ofsted have produced a *What's working well in remote education* report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>). Our staff want to get the teaching and learning right, and are being ambitious in what they are providing. We do recognise that regular contact with teachers and adults from school is important.

Please can we remind all parents and carers, that if for any reason your child will not be able to attend their Teams based lessons, you should be contacting school as you would normally do for a school absence, even if that absence is only for part of a school day. To report an absence, you can either call on 01285 651511 and select option 1, or email attendance@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk

Kingshill Lane, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1HS

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Access to Internet and Digital Devices

We have been able to support approximately 10% of pupils with devices and/or internet access in the last few months, and do not want this to be an obstacle for learning for any family. Clearly there is a sense of urgency with home learning happening for at least the next few weeks. We have gathered information about pupils who are unable to access remote learning due to lack of device, or internet access, or both. We realise that the situation may have changed recently for some families, or it may only have become clear in the last week that sharing arrangements or data allowances are inadequate to participate in the remote learning being provided. As well as being able to loan laptops to pupils, we are also able to request mobile data increases for families. Please contact Mr Pritchard, Deputy Headteacher if you would like to access this aspect of support.

Wellbeing Update

We recognise that for many people, we are reaching a challenging time in the lockdown, now three weeks in, with no real time scale for its end. With that in mind some of you might find the following link from the NSPCC a helpful resource, as it offers some really constructive advice about remaining positive as a family: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/coronavirus-parents-working-from-home/>

In addition, Mrs Christopher, Senior Assistant Head, is contacting all pupils this week regarding staying safe online. We are very mindful that pupils are spending more time than ever online, and whilst it can be an amazing resource, there are also hidden dangers. It is a world that is developing so rapidly, it can be difficult to keep up to date. The following two links come highly recommended in terms of offering parents support and current guidance regarding keeping your children safe in the virtual world: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> , <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Should you have any concerns regarding your child's wellbeing, please contact their tutor, Head of Year, or Mrs Christopher/Mr Morland, we are very willing to help.

Safeguarding of Pupils

Safeguarding of our pupils continues to be of paramount importance. The school's Child Protection Policy remains fundamentally the same; that is children and young people always come first. School will respond robustly to any safeguarding concerns, and they will be dealt with by our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Christopher, Senior Assistant Head), in line with our established procedure.

We have recently reviewed our Child Protection Policy and added an annex to be followed during this period of lockdown. A copy is attached to this letter, and can also be found on the school web site. Should you have any concerns regarding Kingshill pupils, please contact Mrs Christopher on 01285 651511 or email dchristopher@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk

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Year 11 Assessment

As some of you may be aware, Ofqual has now released their consultation paper on this summer's examination/grade allocation. You can access it via the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021?cldee=amh1bnRsZXlAY2lyZW5jZXN0ZXJraW5nc2hpbGwuZ2xvdWNzLnNjaC51aw%3d%3d&recipientid=account-062dea2b1709e3118b6278e3b519b0a5-8ba005e8cb6c4b5eac1f11c818aa4a50&esid=840783c5-5857-eb11-a812-000d3a29f74e>

We will be responding as a school, however they are also interested in the view of affected pupils and parents/carers. Please feel free to respond with your opinion, and share this link with other people who you feel may have an opinion to express.

A useful video has been put together that talks through some of the main points raised in the consultation paper, you may find it helpful to watch this ahead of reading the paper in full.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCmUOOxShxl&safe=true>

You don't have to respond to the consultation in one sitting, you can save as you go and continue later, however the deadline for responding is next Friday, 29th January 2021.

When we have more information regarding the results of the consultation, we will of course inform you.

Cirencester Foodbank

In December, Cirencester Kingshill School donated an incredible 190.8 kg of food that will help families in crisis in Cirencester, Fairford and Tetbury and the surrounding villages to put food on the table. The current national lockdown is difficult for all, but especially so for those who are struggling without basic supplies.

The foodbank continues to need the following items: long-life sponge pudding, instant mash, tinned potatoes, tinned fruit, rice pudding, long-life milk, sanitary products, jars of instant coffee, teabags and toiletries which can be donated via the donation points in Tesco Extra, or Waitrose. A reminder that if you can't get out to donate food, you can donate financially to them to buy products in:

<https://cirencester.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>

Lateral Flow Test Consent

Lateral flow testing of those pupils who are in school has commenced this week. The process has gone very well and we are very pleased with how the pupils approached being tested. Pupils in school will continue to be tested once per week. Depending on trained staff availability, the day of the week may change on occasion. If your child is eligible for a school place and you would like them to be tested, a consent form must have been completed in advance. Please refer to the letter sent to all parents and carers on Wednesday 6th January 2021 for full details.

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If you have any questions or concerns relating to your child and school, please contact their tutor, Head of Year or the main school office, who will pass a message on to the most appropriate person in school. Thank you once again for your support this week. It is very much appreciated by all of us in school.

Please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

Miss C. S. Oates
Headteacher

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