



*Striving for Excellence*

# Cirencester Kingshill School

*Head: Christine S. Oates*

29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you are all continuing to keep safe and well. Pupils have remained focussed on their lessons this week, and we are very proud of their efforts in tuning in to their lessons each day. We appreciate that the novelty of home learning is wearing off for some, however teachers are doing all that they can to provide a learning experience that provides some contrast for pupils between live teaching and independent work to ensure some variety.

The ability to work independently is a skill that will be taken with pupils throughout the rest of their lives. Pupils have the opportunity to build the skills associated with that now, through being able to log in to their lessons themselves, and access resources via their email, or Show My Homework. Your support in helping them do this at home is very much appreciated, and will certainly help them all in their futures. However, if your child is struggling with any element of home learning, please contact their tutor or Head of Year, and they will be able to look at ways to support them.

## **Pupils' return to school**

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the Prime Minister announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term. Instead, the government hopes it will be safe to commence the re-opening of schools from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Schools, pupils, parents and carers will be given at least two weeks' notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education.

School will be closed over the February half-term, but we will remain open to vulnerable children and young people, and the children of critical workers after February half-term, as we are now. All other pupils will continue to receive Microsoft Teams based education at home.

Education attendance restrictions are to be reviewed again in mid-February when the Government will look at when more pupils can be brought back into schools. Our assumption at this stage, in line with many of our peers in the education community, is that pupils will be phased back in to school when restrictions are lifted, rather than all pupils returning at the same time. However, as soon as we are made aware of any changes to the current restrictions that impact our school, we will let you know.

## **Inset Day, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021**

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 will remain an Inset day for teacher training, with school closed to all pupils. There will be no MS Teams lessons that day, lessons will resume on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

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## Basic stationery and replacement exercise books

With pupils currently learning from home, we are mindful that they may come to the end of their exercise books, or run out of basic stationery items such as pens and pencils.

Spare exercise books are available for collection from school reception if you need to replace full ones. Most items of basic stationery are available at low cost from supermarkets or stores such as Home Bargains or Amazon, which remain open during the current lockdown. However, if you are struggling to access or source basic stationery supplies, please contact Mr Pritchard, Deputy Headteacher.

## E-safety and Remote Education

Over recent times, teachers and pupils have all developed their use of remote learning, largely through email and Microsoft Teams as the primary platforms for our teaching and learning. Keeping pupils and teachers safe during remote education is essential, as is ensuring that as parents and carers, you are aware of how to support the safety of your child whilst they are online.

In reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020 (KCSiE), it is important to recognise the reference to Online Safety. It is stated that *'The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues...technology often proves the platform that facilitates harm.'* This emphasises the need for us all to be mindful that with children spending increasing amounts of time using technology to access their work, and working in greater isolation than normal, there is potentially greater risk of harm. We need to ensure that we have a clear policy in place that provides guidance to safeguard children and staff and offers guidance to parents and carers.

As such, we have added an annex to our E-Safety policy, which is available on our school website here <https://www.cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk/assets/Policies/2021/E-safety-and-Remote-education-Jan-2021.pdf> I would urge you to spend a few minutes reading through this with your child to reinforce the important messages that are provided regarding keeping safe whilst online. The guidance also includes clarification around the reporting routes for any concerns that do arise, which link in with the additional updates on our safeguarding procedures that was sent out last week.

Lastly, there is also some useful guidance regarding ensuring that your home network is secure and the appendix includes useful reference to some support materials that may be of interest. Our Heads of Year will also be reinforcing these key messages in their assemblies within the next week.

## Absence Reporting

Please can we remind all parents and carers, that if your child is unable to attend school (either in person if they are currently learning in school, or via MS Teams if they are learning from home), you should be following the standard school absence reporting procedure. To report an absence, you should either call 01285 651511 and select option 1, or email [attendance@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@cirencesterkingshill.gloucs.sch.uk). Mrs Kelly, Attendance Officer, will then ensure that the appropriate staff are made aware.

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## **Positive COVID-19 Results – Close Contact-Self Isolation**

Our Local Authority, Gloucestershire County Council, has asked us to remind our parents and carers that if your child is confirmed as a close contact of a positive case in our school, it is a legal requirement that your child self-isolates and stays at home. This means they must not leave the house, except to go in the garden, and they are not allowed to meet anyone from another household. No other members of the household are required to isolate unless they, or your child, develop symptoms. If your child does not have symptoms, other siblings can still go to school. Positive cases may be identified either through a pupil taking a NHS administered PCR test because they have COVID-19 symptoms, or via a Lateral Flow test in school.

The Local Authority recognises that there is high anxiety in many school communities about the current rate of infection, particularly for those who have had high instances of COVID-19 cases. Parents and carers may want to consider keeping siblings at home if this is the case, as a way of helping to reduce the risk of spread of the virus within the school community. If you do choose to keep siblings at home too, then the Local Authority will be supportive of the absence in these instances.

As I said at the start of this letter, 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. We are all here and happy to help.

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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