

Dear Parents/ Carers,

You will be aware that we have recently sent two letters to you regarding positive Covid cases in our immediate community. Although regrettable, the good news is that both cases have been mild and those concerned have rapidly isolated and followed guidance. This has meant that we have not had to send any 'bubbles' home.

However, you will be aware that the number of cases locally is rising and we are very likely to have more cases in our community. I would therefore like to ask you to again remind your children of the importance of respecting social distances and following good hygiene. Some of our students still seem to believe that because they are in the same bubble as someone else in their year group, this means it is ok to ignore social distancing. This is obviously not the case; the more that we can all socially distance, even when in the same classroom, the less likely the virus is to be passed on.

On this topic, we have re-assessed our risk assessment and will make the move to insist on masks inside the school in public areas such as corridors and the canteen from after half term:

MASKS AND SAFETY MEASURES

Masks will be compulsory in school, indoor public areas - corridors and communal spaces - from after half term:

- Students and staff don't need to wear a mask in classrooms, but can if they want to
- They can take masks off if sat down inside - i.e. eating food in canteen
- Everyone should wear a mask inside during the school day
- Only those with a medical exemption do not need to wear a mask
- **Students need a signed note from a doctor or letter from their parent/carer** if they can't wear a mask
- This should be taken to Student Services where they will be issued with a pass

Please note that being asthmatic is not a reason in itself to not wear a mask. As the advice service, Asthma UK (asthma.org.uk), states: 'Most people with asthma, even if it's severe, can manage to wear a face mask for a short period of time, and shouldn't worry if they need to wear one. Wearing a mask does not reduce a person's oxygen supply or cause a build-up of carbon dioxide. You may have read stories that say that it can, but this isn't true.'

Please do purchase or make a supply of cloth masks for your son/daughter to take to school. These can then be washed and are much less damaging and wasteful than the disposable versions. If a student does not have a mask, they will have to go to Student Services to get one and will have to surrender a valuable item (their phone) in order to do so. We cannot continue to give out lots of disposable masks. As well as being wasteful, these are costing us money which we cannot afford. So far, the combined costings of extra cleaners, reduced revenue from the canteen, wipes and sanitisation materials, are costing tens of thousands of pounds. We have no extra funding for this.

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ATTENDANCE

Our attendance figures this year are better than the average for Devon or nationally, which is good news. The link between good attendance and doing well in school is obvious, but so important. Especially considering the current situation, this has never been so relevant.

Please continue to send your child to school whenever safe and possible. We are seeing a growth in lateness and in truancy. We are raising our expectations on this and any student who arrives in school after 9.10 (rather than 9.30) will now be regarded as absent and obtain a late mark. We are also increasing the number of behaviour points that being late will incur (from 1 to 3). This means that students will be less likely to achieve rewards if they are repeatedly late. This will also lead to a letter home and detention.

Attached with this letter is a detailed leaflet which outlines our procedures, expectations and support when it comes to attendance. Thank you for your support on this.

CAREERS

One of many strengths of our school is our careers provision and opportunities. Our careers advisor, Jo Hussein, has started a regular publication on careers advice and opportunities. This has been emailed to all students and is on our school website under the careers section, [here](#). Please do have a look at edition 1 of 'Careers News: a gentle introduction to careers education at TCS'.

CONNECTING TEIGNBRIDGE CROWDFUNDER

Teignbridge CVS (Community and Voluntary Services) is running a crowdfunder, 'Connecting Teignbridge' to raise fund to help pupils get access to IT so they can do schoolwork and older people to help combat isolation. They will be working with schools, including us, and voluntary groups to deliver the project. During the lockdown, it became even more apparent that access to the internet was vital for people, and we know that children who do not have access to IT are in danger of falling behind. If you are able to donate to this cause, we believe that your money will be well-spent. Donations of over £25 will get a personally autographed Laura Wall 'Goose' book: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/connecting-teignbridge>

I am sorry for the bombardment of information and slightly bossy tone of this update. There's obviously a lot going on and to think about. However, it's been great to have students back in school and learning and a reasonable degree of normality this half term. Despite some confusing headlines, we are not going on a two-week half term and will look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 2nd November as we hurtle towards the year 11 PPEs and Christmas.

I do hope you might be able to enjoy some time off in your families. Stay safe and thank you again for your ongoing support!

Best wishes,



James O'Connell
Principal