

KLA Bulletin

Wednesday, December 9 2020.

Dear parents, pupils and carers,

You may be aware that school leaders received communication from the Department for Education yesterday authorising schools to add a staff training day next Friday, 18th December, if they wish.

Following consultations with leaders of the trust that administers our school, I am writing to clarify that we are **not** going to be closing a day early. There are several reasons for this – the lack of notice for parents, the fact that the day would then have to be added to our calendar between January and June as an extra teaching day when I know that some parents will already have made plans for those days and the fact that we seem to be managing the situation pretty successfully anyway. We already had an INSET day in our calendar on Monday 4th January, and I still intend to hold this with pupils returning to school on **Tuesday 5th January 2021**.

I am very aware that from Monday, any case of covid notified to us in school will have implications on those affected in the bubble by having to self-isolate for 14 days from that point, which would obviously include the Christmas period. The government has been clear throughout that schools should remain open throughout (this latest small concession notwithstanding) and I know from many conversations with parents that this is an issue that is causing much anxious debate within many of our households. I want to try to make clear what our approach to this will be.

- KLA will follow government expectations that schools remain open throughout, although we will not be moving an in-service day next to next Friday. We will support our pupils throughout this period and we intend to create a relaxed environment for the final few days of a difficult year for our amazing pupils to enjoy their final week of term with us.
- Any covid cases identified in school next week will mean that those affected within that bubble will be asked to self-isolate through Christmas, and even, depending on the date of symptoms, right the way through the whole holiday. I appreciate that this is a very difficult situation for some families to face, and that there is no ideal solution to this problem for any of us.
- I have tried to be as accommodating as I possibly can be to the needs of our parents and families throughout the pandemic, believing that you know what is best for your children. I firmly believe this has been the correct approach to take, and I see no reason to change it.
- Therefore, while it is important that I stress that I cannot authorise pupils' absence taken next week by those families trying to reduce the potential need for self-isolation through Christmas unless your child is ill or self-isolating, I equally need to be clear that we will, as always, work with our families to support their own particular circumstances as best we can. If you would like to discuss your own family's requirements further please email me on the address below – please understand that it may take a few days to respond given the volume of parental queries I am currently addressing on this topic.

I hope that, by framing our response in this way, parents feel empowered to confidently make whichever decisions fit their own particular needs. It is the latest in a long line of difficult situations that we have faced this year, and your steady common-sense and support throughout has made my job much easier. I am extremely grateful to all parents for this support.

Finally, I have been asked by Norfolk County Council to share the following information about track and trace during the school holiday

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- Where a pupil tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and Carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Track & Trace
- If a pupil tests positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in a school setting (i.e. before 3pm on Sunday, 20th December if they attended on Friday 18th December) you should contact the school by emailing me on the address below. I will then follow up the necessary contact tracing for those pupils we identify as appropriate for self-isolation. Clearly, I hope not be making any of those phone calls!!
- Norfolk CC have made clear that they expect schools' contact tracing roles to end on Wednesday, December 23rd at the absolute latest – so if you haven't heard from me by then you know your Christmas is safe!!

It has been easily the most challenging year of my career – as I know is the case for many of you – and I hope that you agree that the approaches we are taking are designed to give every KLA family the best chance of enjoying a happy, peaceful and coronavirus-free Christmas and the healthy holiday you all so deserve.

I expect to write one final KLA Bulletin next week before we actually break up next Friday, but for the moment I hope this update is helpful to you – as always if you have any further queries please do let me know by emailing alan.fletcher@kla.eastern-mat.co.uk and I will do my best to provide answers.

Best wishes

Alan Fletcher