

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to thank you all for your ongoing support in what continues to be very challenging circumstances at Outwood Academy Hemsworth, linked to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Whilst the government has announced this week a reduction in restrictive measures, the academy has high staff absence due to Covid and securing regular agency supply staff remains particularly difficult. I can assure you that my decision to partially close the academy is never taken lightly and only when staff absence means that I cannot ensure the health and safety standards required to remain fully open.

As parents and carers, I understand you will want to know what measures I have already taken to address the issues we are presented with. Firstly, the academy continues to strongly advise all students, unless exempt, to wear masks in classrooms and communal areas. This was not an easy decision, but whilst there are high local rates of infection, our risk assessment must include this preventative measure. Students should continue to bring their own mask to school unless they have an exemption pass issued by our Health and First Aid Lead. We all understand that mask wearing is challenging for students, but if you can support the academy's message at home it would be gratefully appreciated. Staff also continue to follow this guidance with the exception of removing their masks to teach. Likewise, as soon as the academy risk assessment allows a change to mask wearing I will communicate this to students, parents and carers at the earliest opportunity.

Furthermore, I have taken the decision to reshape our Google Classroom provision to provide live-streamed teaching should the academy require any further partial closures. The academy will also provide a live-streamed tutor session to ensure students can still access their personal development and wellbeing curriculum. In addition, our Deep Learning and Ed Tech leaders will be spending time next week ensuring that all students fully understand how to access their Google Classroom work, including any live-streamed lessons or resources provided by teachers.

In addition, I need to ask for your support in terms of reinforcing the importance of completing Google Classroom work or extended learning activities, whether this be when the academy is fully open or during a partial closure. We all recognise that when students are in good study habits they find independent learning much easier to manage. Simple steps can be taken to support this by ensuring students have access to a quiet place to work; asking students what homework or extended learning they have been set to ensure they complete it. If a partial closure is in place, help students to follow the timetable provided and remind them to take a break that follows their normal school timetable. In order for parents/carers to support their children at home, we have created a [Home Learning webpage](http://homelearning.outwood.com) (homelearning.outwood.com) which provides you with guidance on how to access Google Classroom with your child. If your child is unable to log into Google Classroom (for example, if they have forgotten their password) or you have no access to IT at home please contact Gary Ives, Vice Principal. g.ives@hemsworth.outwood.com

Parents/carers can also sign up for Google Guardian Summaries which allows you to opt-in and receive regular email updates about your child's work and classes. These emails include information about missing work, upcoming work, and class activity including announcements and questions posted in the class stream. You can choose to receive these emails daily or weekly. If this is something you would be interested in, please follow this link and ask your child to complete the Google form. The form can only be accessed from an Outwood email address. If you try to access it from a personal account, you will be denied access. Therefore, your son/daughter must sign in to Google using their own academy email address to access the form: <http://guardian-summaries.outwood.com>

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Registered office address: Potovens Lane, Outwood, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2PF.

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A list of Directors' names is open to inspection at our registered office.

For parents and carers of students in Key Stage 3, I would like to remind you of our Masterclasses that form a central part of our elective curriculum. Accessed via this dedicated Google Site <https://sites.google.com/outwood.com/ks3-ogat-masterclasses/home>, Masterclasses are an enrichment activity designed to inspire students to go further in their learning journeys. Taught by the best teachers across the Central region, our Masterclasses are an excellent way to stretch and challenge students as well as helping them to develop a real love of learning. Students will be rewarded each half term for completing Masterclasses: our Bronze award is for students who complete 3 Masterclasses, Silver is awarded to students who complete between 4-8 Masterclasses and those who complete 9-10 Masterclasses will achieve Gold. The Masterclass website can also be used by Key Stage 3 students as an extension activity if a partial closure is in place.

I know I speak for all of the Hemsworth staff when I say how proud we are of our students and their attitude to learning in school. Attendance at the academy has never been more important; staff are working tirelessly to ensure any gaps in learning are addressed and that students are well-supported to achieve their potential. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the academy.

Yours faithfully



Toby Rutter
Principal