

Orchard School Bristol

Filton Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0XZ

T. 0117 377 2000

E. info@orchard.tila.school

www.osb.school



INSPIRE TODAY, EMPOWER FOR LIFE

Headteacher: Mrs Julia Hinchliffe **MA (Hons), MA, NPQH**

18 December 2020

Dear parents and carers

Thank you for all your continued support over the past term. I have been so impressed by your fantastic children and our wonderful staff team, who have been determined to work hard and enjoy their time in school. I have also been impressed by the resilience of your sons/daughters, when they have had to spend time at home self-isolating, and yet so many have produced outstanding remote learning and excellent quality homework.

This week I have handed out 30 Headteacher Commendations, earned for exceptional home learning, for exceptional student leadership or for exceptional participation outside school. What an absolute joy!

Covid update

The first round of testing as part of a Covid study with Bristol University took place this week. Students in Year 8 and staff (and in future students in Year 10 too) had the chance to do a Covid saliva test. It was fantastic to receive results just before the holidays that every test result was negative. If students in Years 8 and 10 wish to participate in this saliva testing, the opportunity is opening up again in January.

Over the holidays, we still need to carry out some tracing of students if a student has tested positive and was recently in school. Please see the [Covid Dates Information](#), which should help you work out if your child has a positive test, whether you need to contact the school, and when your child could return to school.

Covid Winter Free School Meal vouchers

If your child normally receives Free School Meals, you should now have received your Winter Covid vouchers which can be spent in the supermarket of your choice. If you have any difficulties with the vouchers, please contact sbm@orchard.tila.school

Start of Term – Department for Education announcements

We heard yesterday that the Department for Education want us to have a staggered start in January for our year groups. This is to reduce the spread of the virus at a point when households may have been mixing over the festive period. We will therefore be amending our start dates for different year groups, as follows.



Monday 4th January 2021	This is an INSET day	No school for students and no remote learning
Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th January	School is only open for Year 11 students for normal lessons.	For students in Years 7 – 10 your lessons will be delivered by remote learning for these 4 days.
	School is also open for a few of our most vulnerable students in Years 7 - 10 or children of critical workers who cannot stay at home. If you think your child falls into this second group, please contact your Pastoral manager, or they will be in contact with you on Monday 4 th January to give you further information. These students will have supervised remote learning on laptops in school, so they will learn alongside their year group who are at home. Please bring a pair of low-cost earphones if you can.	
Monday 11 January onwards	All students in school for normal lessons	

Please read our [Remote Learning Information](#) for parents on our website. This gives you details of what to expect when your child is learning remotely on laptops/computers from home.

Does your child normally receive Free School Meals, but will be at home for the first week of school in January? If so, we will be in touch with you to ensure you can pick up a great free meal parcel for these days when your children in Years 7 – 10 are at home.

Does your child need access to a laptop? Please can you contact your Pastoral Manager **after the holidays** if your child needs to borrow one for these 4 days of remote learning. We can also support with internet access. We are regularly surveying children/parents so we have a good idea of who needs support with devices, and we know that laptops can break down. We don't want any children to miss out on learning, so please contact your pastoral manager if you need any help:

- Year 7 – Ms Antigha – nantigha@orchard.tila.school
- Year 8 – Miss Murphy-Piper – dpiper@orchard.tila.school
- Year 9 – Miss Bhakerd ebhakerd@orchard.tila.school
- Year 10 – Miss Pointing tpointing@orchard.tila.school
- Year 11 – Mr Grafton mgrafton@orchard.tila.school

Mass testing for Covid in schools

We also received information yesterday about mass testing for Covid in schools. We are working with support from our central Trust team to identify the best way to organise this and arrange for parental consent. The aim is to establish regular Covid testing in schools including daily testing for close contacts, so your children can stay in school learning for as long as possible. We will be working over the break to try to get this in place efficiently in good time.

Looking ahead

We have some important dates to get in the diary in January. Following two very successful parents evenings that were run virtually as a trial, using our parents evening booking system for 5 minute video meetings with each teacher, we had overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents. We will therefore be continuing our parent evenings virtually over this year.

- Year 10 Parents Evening – Thursday 14th January

Year 11 have their critical mock exams in January which they need to be revising for in the second part of this holiday

- Creative i-Media and Sports Science real GCSE exams – Monday 11 January
- Mocks through January (please refer to Mr Grafton's email to Year 11 parents/carers for full details)

Uniform in January

Uniform has on the whole been very good this term. A few students have started wearing black jeans and trainers as their trousers/shoes have broken. Please can you arrange for your son/daughter to be in school trousers and school shoes from January. We will contact parents/carers where this is a problem – and please let us know if you need help purchasing these items; we are happy to use our Hardship Fund to have the students in correct uniform.

Pencil cases in January

All students need to be bringing in their pencil cases with the right equipment in January. We cannot lend out equipment. Again, if you need help with equipment, we are prepared to use our Hardship fund. Please just speak to your Pastoral Manager. Parents, please check if your child needs refills of the following:

- Black or blue biros
- Red biro
- Ruler
- Pencil and rubber
- Protractor and pair of compasses
- Calculator (Casio fx 83/85gt)

We have provided all students with a glue stick and a mini whiteboard marker. When these run out, your child can take their old glue stick and swap it for a new one at Student Reception.

Face coverings

Students have been absolutely superb at wearing masks around school, taking their responsibilities seriously. However, a few children forget their masks every so often, and many find their disposable mask breaks during the day. The impact of this when multiplied by over 900 children a day, is that we are spending just under £200 a week on mask replacements. This is unsustainable for us as a school.

From January, we will therefore need to charge for masks. If your child needs to be given a mask, we will add a £1.50 per mask payment onto ParentPay, and every week or so you will receive a letter to inform you of payment. We hope this will encourage your child to bring in spare masks. Please consider buying a set of cloth masks for your children over this Christmas period – they make great stocking fillers and are very good value in supermarkets.

Staff changes

At the end of this term we are saying goodbye to the following staff:

- Miss Sarah Davies – Second in Maths – who is returning to her previous school to teach A Level
- Mrs Anna Mooney – administrator – who is spending more time in a caring role
- Mrs Anna Pearce – Year 11 Pastoral Manager who has been on maternity leave - and is moving to work in a charity
- Mr Elcock - the interim Year 11 Pastoral Manager – who is retiring.

We wish these staff all the very best and thank them for all their dedication to the children at the school.

We are looking forward to warmly welcoming the following staff to our school community between January and April:

- Mrs Tasmina Ahmed – Second in Maths
- Miss Sara Green – Academic Mentor
- Mrs Kelly Latham - Data Administrator
- Mrs Humera Akbar Hannam – Second in Science (maternity cover)
- Mr Gary Scott-Mullen – Pastoral Manager for Year 11

School gates - please do not drive down Northwick Road

Thank you also for your adaptation to the new school gates. The staff carpark has become a much safer space now, and we have had no accidents or near-accidents since the gates were installed – which is hugely reassuring.

There are around 15 secondary school parents who are driving down Northwick Road to drop their children right by the school gate, or who are parking on double yellow lines, on pavements or causing a danger to pedestrians and cyclists. This congestion is not fair on residents, some of whom are feeling very frustrated by the car drivers. Please do not use Northwick Road. You can use the car park next to the school on Filton Road (just a one-minute walk from the Filton Road pedestrian entrance), or alternatively encourage your children to walk in.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff at Orchard School, we wish you and your family a relaxing and safe break. Merry Christmas and happy festive season!

Yours sincerely



Julia Hinchliffe, Headteacher