

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

During the months of September and October, Sperrin College avoided any disruption to learning in terms of bubble classes or year groups being required to remain at home and engage with remote learning. This enabled us to make a good start to the new academic year.

However, as we embark upon a new half-term, it is with regret that the Board of Governors have taken the unavoidable decision to implement a **PARTIAL closure** of the college **for 5 days, commencing Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.**

At the mid-way point of the extended half-term break a significant number of teaching staff were notified by the Covid-19 App that they are required to isolate for a period of 14 days from receipt of the notification.

- 12 teachers were notified
- NO member of the school staff has tested positive
- Staff are legally required to isolate for the specified time

I have contacted and sought the most up-to-date advice from the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Education Authority (EA) on the appropriate protocols to follow.

It is possible, but not certain, that a member, or members of the student body with the Covid-19 App, has tested positive during the extended break and has therefore triggered these notifications - the App identifies contacts up to 14 days prior to a positive diagnosis. At the time of writing, we have not been notified of such a case.

*Can I remind Parents/Guardians of our **'out of hours' Covid-19 contact form** on the home page of the school website. It is **essential that we are notified** of any developments regarding your child and Covid-19, even during weekends and holidays.*

I do appreciate the concerns of parents, pupils and the wider school community and wish to reassure you that every precaution has been taken. Stringent cleaning protocols are followed and all classrooms were thoroughly cleaned as standard procedure during the first week of the extended-break.

Because these developments have occurred during half-term, the PHA have advised that **no further action** is required in relation to our pupils.

However, due to the significant reduction in teaching staff, I cannot ensure the safe running of the school, or the delivery of an effective 'in-school' learning and teaching programme. Therefore, the difficult decision to partially close the school has been taken. The implications of this are as follows:

- **Years 8, 9 & 10** will **learn from home** for 5 days, commencing Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November - they **should not attend school.**
- **Years 11, 12, 13 & 14** will **attend** school **as normal**

Teachers who are self-isolating will continue to work from home. This will involve the setting and monitoring of appropriate work for both students remaining in school and those working remotely.

We are keenly aware of the impact that this will have upon families, not least in relation to child-care. Multiple factors formed this decision, including the availability of specific staff members and the upcoming November external examination series for GCSE students. We regret the inconvenience caused.

Specific details regarding learning from home and how this will impact you and your child have been outlined on the following page. I have also attached a summary guide to our Remote Learning Policy at the end of this letter.

Ensuring the safe return of pupils and staff to school is my absolute priority and I will continue to monitor this situation carefully and keep you informed.

For those students who are entitled to **free school meals**, a five-day Food Box, containing ingredients suitable for preparing meals in line with the Nutritional standards for school lunches, will be available for collection in school on Monday. **Parents requiring this facility should contact the school as early as possible so that suitable arrangements can be made.**

Parents with any further questions or concerns are welcome to contact the school office via email. The office will reopen for phone calls on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. School resumes on a **Week 2 timetable**.

We appreciate your continued cooperation and support.

Kind regards,

**B. A. Heron**

B Heron

Principal



## YEAR 8, 9 & 10 - LEARNING FROM HOME

KS3 pupils will be learning from home for 5 days from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Returning to school on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November.

Recent Learning Tutor lessons have been focused on developing pupil understanding of Google Classroom. A comprehensive guide (including technical support) can be found on our website -

<http://www.sperrincollege.com/online-learning.html>

### REMOTE LEARNING TIMETABLE

- On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils should focus on using **My Maths and Accelerated Reader**.
- From Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>, pupils should follow their normal school timetable (where possible) and complete learning activities set by their teachers on **Google Classroom**.
- PE lessons will not be set for Year 8 & 9 on Google Classroom.
- The week commencing Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November is timetable **WEEK 2**.
- Pupils should ensure that they complete and **hand in work on the due date**. Due dates will be set by teachers in broad alignment with pupil time tables.

We expect **full engagement in remote learning**, but we are conscious of differing home circumstances and ask that pupils do their best in their situation.

Further details regarding our Remote Learning Policy are attached at the end of this document.

### QUESTIONS

The school office will reopen on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. If you have questions relating to any of the above, please contact the school via email.

# REMOTE LEARNING POLICY

## SUMMARY



### WHAT IS REMOTE LEARNING AND WHEN IS IT USED AT SPERRIN COLLEGE?

Remote learning is a digital learning platform, such as '*Google Classroom*', which facilitates pupil learning in a virtual environment outside of the classroom. It is **used in the event of a partial or full school closure and when individual or small groups of pupils are self-isolating**. It may **also support normal learning practices** to upskill learners in advance of these scenarios and to prepare them for further education, university, and the world of work. It is not used to provide work in cases of normal illness.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS?

- Upskill learners whilst in school to prepare them for the possibility of independent, remote learning.
- Conduct phone calls home during prolonged periods of school closure.
- Maintain their Google Classrooms in line with the school's recommended '*Best Practice in Remote Learning*' and ensure that the instructional quality of the classrooms reflects effective practice in learning and teaching.
- **Set regular work for pupils and provide group or individual feedback** on more substantial tasks.
- If choosing to use 'Google Meet' or 'Screen Casting' with Key Stage 5 pupils, adhere to the protocols outlined in the school's safeguarding policies.

### WHAT PART DO LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS PLAY?

- In the event of a prolonged period of closure, the LSA will contact pupils under their care and report to the SENCO any issues that require follow-up.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT POINTS FOR PUPILS TO UNDERSTAND?

- **Maintain a structure to the day** and endeavour to **submit work on the due date** and, as far as possible, during normal working hours, trying to follow their normal timetable.
- Ensure that **communications with teachers and other pupils are respectful** and in line with the high standards of conduct expected.
- Whilst being mindful that teachers may not see private comments submitted after due dates, inform teachers of any issues with your learning.
- **Read instructions and success criteria carefully** and act on feedback given by teachers.
- At Key Stage 5, follow the protocols for 'Google Meets' as outlined during Learning Tutor lessons and in the school's Remote Learning Policy.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT POINTS FOR PARENTS TO KNOW?

- Help support your child to maintain a structure to their day and motivate them to complete work set in a timely manner, during normal working hours (where possible).
- Make the school aware (via email) if your child is unable to complete work (this may be due to illness or another issue such as access difficulties).
- In-line with school safeguarding procedures and GDPR, do not join Google Classrooms. Use normal protocols for contacting school staff such as telephone or the school's generic info email account.

### WHAT SHOULD PUPILS DO IF THEY EXPERIENCE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES?

- Check the online learning section of the school website for video support and solutions to common problems or complete a technical support form and a member of staff will contact you as soon as possible.