

9th July 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Again, I write to update you of arrangements at Forge Valley School, in particular the last week of term, and an overview of preparations for next year. I, however, would like to reflect on the situation we faced this week.

As you will be aware pupils, apart from those in Year 7 and 8, have not been in school and have moved onto remote learning at home. This is primarily due to a very high number of staff being contacted by the NHS "Track and Trace" application. If a member of staff is told to self-isolate, they can deliver lessons live from their home. However, if their class remains in school, there needs to be another teacher in school to supervise the class. This increases the number of staff needed to run the school and we simply did not have enough staff on site to teach and supervise all pupils. Thank you for your understanding and for supporting us during this time.

In addition to staff absence, a small number of class bubbles have been isolating. I want to stress that we have very few cases of COVID-19 confirmed by a PCR test. Since so many pupils have been at home, we can all come back to school next week safely.

At 2.40pm on Tuesday 6th July, the school made the decision to keep pupils in school for around 25 minutes at the end of the school day. This was due to an adult coming onto site making threats to a small number of pupils. This relates to a very minor issue between two pupils. At the time this adult refused to name the pupils, and to ensure everyone's safety, pupils were kept in classrooms while the police arrived. I have since identified this individual and banned him from the school site and surrounding area. Social media posts have grossly exaggerated the incident. This was a case of an adult making the wrong decision in how to deal with a petty argument between two children. It is such a shame when an adult's behaviour is worse than the children's!

Arrangements for the final week of term

All year groups and bubbles will return on Monday 12th July. This is apart from the following form groups who will return as outlined below –

Form Group	Return Date
8RBL	Tuesday 13 th July
9MG	Tuesday 13 th July
9IR	Tuesday 13 th July
9LB	Tuesday 13 th July

Remote Learning will continue up to the point of return for the pupils above and pupils should continue to self-isolate.

We will be holding Sports Days on Wednesday and Thursday next week. Pupils have already been briefed when these will take place. Sports clothing is to be worn by pupils on the day of their Sports Day. Finally, next Friday will be a non-uniform day and the school will buy all pupils an ice cream to say thank you from staff for the way they have handled this year. Pupils should bring in an optional £1 contribution for non-uniform day, which will be donated to a charity of pupils' choosing. School will dismiss at 12.15pm. Lunch will be provided for pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Arrangements during the summer holidays

This year the school will be busier than ever during the summer break. We have several extensive maintenance projects being undertaken during the holidays. As you will be aware GCSE and A levels are being awarded in a different way this year. This requires school staff to be available during weeks 4 and 5 of the holidays to administer this extensive process and to ensure the smooth progression of our pupils to their next phase of education. In the last full week of the holidays, we are running a summer school for over 200 pupils. This is part of our recovery and transition programme. After the bank holiday weekend, the school will be preparing for the return of pupils. This brings me to the start of the new academic year.

Arrangements for September

As things stand, school will be organised in a more familiar way. Pupils will not be confined to bubbles and will move between lessons to a range of different classrooms. The school will start at 8.40am for all pupils. Breaks and lunch will however continue to be staggered. This is to allow the increasing numbers of pupils at school to access school catering with a minimal amount of queuing. This arrangement has been very popular with pupils. A further continuation will be the use of School Cloud to run Parents' Evenings. I would like to thank those parents that have provided me with feedback on this development.

I will write to parents confirming arrangements in the last week of the holidays. This will include details of the first day, which is usually a staggered start to allow new Year 7 to arrive before other year groups.

This is likely to be the last communication from myself this year and therefore I again thank you for your support. I hope you enjoy the summer this year and that you keep safe.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D Barrowclough
Headteacher