

**Headteacher:
Mrs M Davis**

26th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

You will no doubt have been keeping up with the government announcements re returning to school this week. My apologies if this rather overly long letter bombards you with yet more information, however we have, as you would expect, been working very hard this week to review plans and logistics to enable safe return to school.

In order to assist us in communications, we have launched a new school app this week – School Ping – this should enable greater ease of contact and sharing of information with tutors and parents. It has numerous extra facilities, including photographic and Pdf file sharing which will enable you to see your son's work in school and is free to download from the app store. You will receive new instructions how to load and use the app over the next week, some are already piloting the process. At the end of next week, we will remove the current app and all new communications will be sent via School PING.

We are working through plans for wider opening of school from the 8th March. There is an expectation from the DfE for the school to continue using lateral flow testing for all staff and students and we are working through the logistics as to how we will deliver that twice weekly. There may be some phased return over the first week to ensure we have capacity to test everyone safely. I appreciate some students and parents have anxieties regarding their return; your son's tutor will contact you individually next week with more detailed plans.

It is important to remember that covid protocols will still need to be observed in school as well as safely staying at home when returning from school until the government's next announcement. That means in school, we must still observe social distancing, regular cleaning and handwashing or use of sanitiser.

Most boys have adapted very well to the use of masks, however some are still forgetting to wear them in taxis. Please remind your son to wear these as it is important to keep the drivers safe as well and they have the right to refuse a ride if protocols are not being followed. It has been great to see the variety of masks in school. Students are permitted to wear their own masks as well as the Cornfield ones, however, can I please encourage you to ensure that these are washed regularly – they should have a clean one every day and not just bury the same one in their pocket for the week please.

We have ensured that nearly all of our students now have laptops or notepads that they can work on remotely or have individual devices assigned to them in school. This has been a huge undertaking by the school and our IT providers. Thank you for your help and patience in assisting your son to engage in online learning, this has had a very positive impact on lots of boys learning. When returning to school, the boys will still have the use of the same device and it will certainly assist in reducing any cross contamination in school. As such could I please ask you to ensure your son has his device to bring into school every day; that you check that he has all components ready to bring. We have spent a large amount of money on the devices, bags, leads and a mouse to operate; please help your son look after this equipment.

Since 2013 Cornfield School has operated as part of a family/federation of other special schools – the Thrive Federation. We have come to a point where we would like to make some changes to the overall governance: The Thrive Federation (Oak Grove, Palatine, Herons Dale and Cornfield School) is changing the governance arrangements to enable us to be more effective in terms of governance and leadership and ultimately to be better able to serve our wider communities.

As of the 1st April 2021 the Governing Body (GB) will move from being the governing body of all four schools and transfer governorship to what is currently the management committee (MC) of each different school. The Thrive Federation will still be a group of schools working together that do so through a strategic group of Chairs of Governors from each of the schools and the relevant headteachers. This will enable us all to continue working together; this change does not preclude us from any current work or future work as a group of schools and fundamentally stops lots of repeat reporting at MC level and GB level. As part of this, we will need to formally (re)elect a staff governor and parent governors. If you would be interested in being involved with this in any way, please contact me via the school office for an informal chat or to ask any questions.

Those students who are eligible for Free School Meals will receive Endred vouchers again this week and next week. The voucher system will be stopped from 8th March as students begin to return to school. Please talk to tutors visiting you on home visits if you have any concerns about this.

The latest news this week is regarding examinations at GCSE level. As anticipated, student grades will now be teacher assessed and controlled assessed tasks in school will be used to assist this. All work completed by boys on remote learning will also be used as part of the assessment process. Year 11 boys in particular, have grasped the importance of this well and continue to work very hard on their remote learning platforms. Thank you for your help with this, your encouragement has ensured that boys have kept up with the work set and will have plenty of evidence to present for assessment. We will send further details to you when we receive it.

In the meanwhile, may I wish you a very pleasant weekend – spring is nearly here with the weather to match for the next two days at least!!

If you have any queries or concerns at all, please contact your son's tutor or the main office office@cornfieldschool.org.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Mrs M Davis
Headteacher

If any of this information is not clear please telephone the school on 01903 731277 where someone will explain it to you

Cornfield School is part of the Federation of Special Schools comprising Cornfield, Oak Grove, Palatine and Herons Dale

