



1st April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Reflections of 12 months of school during the pandemic

It is with a great sense of pride that I write to you in reflection, one year on from when schools first went into national lockdown. Over the past twelve months I have seen our school community come together, learn to work in ways we would never have thought possible and demonstrate a resilience and positivity that has been truly remarkable. I refer to our school community as a collective as this is what it is. Every member of our school community has had a part to play; the students, the staff, governors and you, our families, who have given us the support we have needed through this most challenging time.

A year ago, on March 3rd and 4th we were visited by Ofsted. They were full of praise for our school: for the dual focus on personal development and academic success; for the way in which we have all managed the rapid growth of our school from 740 to 1220 students; for the excellent teaching observed and for the exceptional support our students receive from support staff and teachers. Almost immediately after this visit we had to close our school for weeks, for the first time in its recent history. In the period between the start of the first national lockdown and the students returning from the most recent lockdown, we have been through transformational change. Students and teachers have learned to work together virtually, through live lessons and feedback online, demonstrating extraordinary adaptability to cope with the changing nature of learning. Students in examination year groups have had to be particularly resilient and courageous, tackling a range of assessments, both remotely and in class. It is clear that students have come out of lockdown with a new set of skills and an ability to work in different ways and there are aspects of their learning that will be enhanced and changed forever.

As a school community we have also had to deal with the reality of the virus and its impact on students, teachers and their families. I can honestly say that November 2020 was one of the most difficult periods of my 22 years in education. There will have been hundreds of families affected in some way, either through children having to self-isolate due to positive cases or being in close contact with others. I know that for many of you there have been challenging times throughout the pandemic and I hope we can continue to be of support where support is needed. I am proud of how we have managed the return to school; around 3,000 tests were carried out in school and over 700 students returned results from home testing after the first round. To date we have had very few positive cases reported to school.

As we go into the Easter holiday, with some restrictions being lifted, it is imperative that students follow the government guidelines: "Hands, Space, Face" has been joined by "Fresh Air". A reminder that the Rule of 6 meeting outside is in place and it is important. I would urge students to think back to November, we do not want the progress we have made to stall following this holiday. Let's work together and follow the Prime Minister's urging of caution, to ensure our school gates remain open and we can begin to enjoy some of the aspects of school in the summer term, such as extra-curricular clubs, which have been denied to us since lock down began last March.

Please turn over for some important updates and reminders.



Important reminders and updates

In my previous blog on the 12th March, I outlined our expectations and standards in regards to school uniform, which is in line with our school policy and as per the information on our website (link: <https://www.thecoleshillschool.org/parents/school-uniform>).

Clive Mark Sheldon is our uniform supplier, and from the 12th April will be open 3 days a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) 9.30am-4.30pm. You are also able to order online.

As a brief reminder, please support us in reinforcing the below standards:

PE Kit

- On days when students have PE they must come in official Coleshill branded PE kit, as specified in the uniform list.

School Uniform

- Hoodies are not allowed at all. Not for PE and not as a substitute for a coat. They will be confiscated.
- Coats may be needed in school, as windows and doors are open at the moment, but gilets/sleeveless coats are not allowed. Coats are to be worn in addition to, not instead of, a blazer. Gilets will be confiscated.
- Shoes should be black and polishable leather.

Accessories

- Piercings are not allowed beyond one stud earring in each ear. Students will be asked to remove them.
Please ensure that your child does not get additional piercings over the holiday.
- False nails and/or coloured nails are not allowed. Students will need to remove false nails.
Please ensure that long/false nails that are not appropriate for school are not done over the holiday.
- Hair colours that are not natural (e.g. blue, green, bright red, pink or combinations of unnatural colours such as black and pink) are not allowed. Students will need to return their hair to a natural colour.
Please ensure that your child does not colour their hair, as outlined above, over the holiday.

Face Coverings

Face coverings will still be required after Easter as we continue with our 'masks to move' approach, so please do ensure that your child has a supply of face coverings on return to school.

Technology

The use of mobile devices is clearly outlined in our mobile phone policy that can be found on our website (link: https://www.thecoleshillschool.org/uploads/PDF/Policy/10a-Mobile_phone_policy_2017.pdf)

- Mobile devices, air pods and headphones are only allowed at social time and will be confiscated if seen when students are moving around the school or in lessons, unless the teacher has given permission for them to be used as a learning device for an educational activity.

This half term we have communicated both with parents and students to ensure that there is a consistent message and understanding in relation to our school uniform and expectations, and where appropriate have supported individual students to secure the appropriate uniform, to ensure that we are both fair and consistent across the school. After the holiday, if students are still unable to meet the expectations (as outlined above and in our policies), we will liaise with you to ensure that this is rectified and any appropriate actions taken. We appreciate your ongoing support with ensuring that The Coleshill School continues to maintain and reinforce the highest standards and expectations of all our students.



At Easter we say goodbye and congratulations to Mrs Cornell. Mrs Cornell joined the school in September 2015 and has been an exceptional senior leader during her time with us, with many students and staff benefiting from her expertise. She is now going to lead behaviour across another multi academy trust and we wish her every success; we thank her for her work during her time at Coleshill. In her place Miss Brindley, Associate Deputy Headteacher, will be leading on behaviour and pastoral care and also leading Year 9. Your first point of call, for any pastoral concern, should be your child's tutor who may request the support of the relevant Year Leader.

Start of term

The new term begins at 8.45am, as normal, for all students on Monday April 19th. Please see my separate letter if you are a parent of Year 11 or 13 for further updates for students in these year groups.

I wish you a peaceful Easter holiday and hope you can enjoy quality time with family and friends.

Very best wishes

I Smith-Childs

Ian Smith-Childs
Headteacher



Mrs Cornell, Mr Smith-Childs and Miss Brindley