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THE THOMAS ADAMS SCHOOL, WEM

incorporating

ADAMS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM CENTRE ADAMS HOUSE (BOARDING)

Headteacher: Mark Cooper BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher: Gavin Sterry BSc (Hons) MA



Dear Parents/Carers,

As we begin our sixth week at Thomas Adams since we fully reopened on the 2nd September, I am pleased to inform you that we have not yet had a single positive case of COVID-19 within our school community.

It has been wonderful to welcome everyone back into school, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you at home for your continued support and trust at this time. All of the staff in school are working hard to provide the best education for your child, whilst ensuring the safety of the whole school community.

You will already be aware of the steps we have put in place to minimise the risk of infection at school and, as promised, we review our provisions on a weekly basis, or when new guidance from the government is published. We recently reviewed curriculum planning and are already beginning to safely offer some opportunities for exam groups to access specialist areas of the school.

Every subject area has extensive plans in place to ensure all groups are covering key content and we are regularly assessing pupil progress. Year 7 will be completing a range of baseline tests in Maths and English (including Reading and Spelling age tests), and interventions have already begun to support targeted pupils. Year 11 are currently completing formal in-class tests, which will give us a clear indication of any gaps in each individual child's knowledge, whilst also providing a set of important grades that may be used in the coming months if there are further disruptions to learning or changes to government guidance.

We also hope to be introducing a small number of extra-curricular activities after October half term. These would be offered within year group bubbles, and will probably be sport related in the first instance. In addition, to try and maintain as full an experience as possible, our House Coordinator is currently adapting some of our house events to allow students the opportunity to get involved and contribute to the wider school community.

Uniform (Years 7 – 11) and Masks

Again, thank you for your support with your child's uniform - they are wearing it well and they look very smart. However, I would just like to remind parents that the correct colour trousers for boys and girls is **grey** and not black.

As the colder weather approaches, we realise that the pupils will want to wear warmer garments on days when they have PE. Therefore, pupils may wear navy, white, black or royal blue skins under their PE kit and they can wear their blazer, their Year 11 sweatshirt or the Thomas Adams fleece, along with the Thomas Adams track suit bottoms (all available from the School Shop). If they have another Thomas Adams garment, these may also be worn, but any other branded jumpers or hoodies are not acceptable. Coats may also be worn, but these need to be removed when entering the building.

The vast majority of students have been wearing masks on school transport and at the correct times and places around school. Unfortunately, there is a small minority of pupils who have not been bringing masks into school, this has resulted in us having to provide over 300 masks over the last 2 weeks. We do not receive any funding for PPE, hand sanitiser or any other product required to keep everyone safe at school. Therefore, from Monday 12th October, we will be charging 25p to Parentpay if we have to provide your child with a mask. Please ensure they have at least one with them every day to avoid this charge.



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Catering

Having Aspens as our new catering provider, we had moved away from fast food and disposable crockery. However, due to the pressures of catering for over a thousand students, whilst maintaining bubbles and ensuring that the canteen is cleaned between each group, it has become necessary to offer a slightly restricted menu and a return to using disposable packaging for the moment. This allows staff to focus on cleaning down areas quickly and efficiently during the course of each lunchtime. We are regularly reviewing the menu and have already introduced a wider range of dishes which have much healthier options.

Attendance and Self-isolating

Attendance has been excellent so far, especially when considering the national issues relating to the test and trace programme. Last week our attendance across the whole school was over 94%, this is well above the national average of 80%. I would like to thank you, the families, for following the advice given by the government and health authorities.

Please do not send your child into school if they are displaying any of the main COVID-19 symptoms; high temperature, persistent cough, loss of sense of smell or taste. Please keep the school informed about any absence and the reasons for non-attendance. If we have to send your child home with symptoms, the school will contact you in the first instance and will provide all the supporting information you will need to access a test.

If a child has to self-isolate for 10 days due to a positive test, or for 14 days because a family member has tested positive, and they are well enough to complete school work, this will be made available via Teams. There will be a range of work set, in line with the pupil's timetable and the topics being taught in class. The work is likely to be more instructional in nature, as the teacher will still be teaching the class in school.

COVID-19 and Tier 2 (local lockdown)

As I stated at the start of this letter, we have been incredibly fortunate not to have had any positive cases within our staff and student community so far. In the event that we do, I will contact the DfE hotline and the local authority public health team. They will provide us with advice and will direct us to share information about anyone who has been in close proximity to the confirmed case. They will carry out a risk assessment and issue us with a definitive list of those who need to self-isolate. I must emphasise that they will be making the decision based on government guidelines and we must follow their advice. They are available to us 7 days a week and I will communicate as promptly as possible via letter/email to parents of those who will be directly affected. There will be further information posted on the school website.

We have clear contingency plans in place, which include a year group rota and adapted timetables, should there be a local lockdown put in place due to an increase in the number of infections in Wem or Shropshire. This will follow government guidelines which specify a fortnightly rotation with limited year groups on site at any one time. Lessons, which are normally taught in school, will be replaced with remote learning for the period of rotation where a year group is at home. These sessions will be led by your child's normal class teacher via Teams.

There will always be full time, on-site provision for the children of key workers.

I will keep you informed of any changes we make over the coming weeks. We will continue to make provisions for the safety of all members of our community whilst aiming to offer an element of normality for our pupils.

Thank you once again for your continued support and trust during this difficult time.

Yours faithfully



Mark Cooper
Headteacher