

11/09/2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will be aware that we have been working throughout the past months to ensure the safety of our young people, their families and our school staff throughout the start of our new school year. Our young people have been outstanding in making adjustments and accepting the guidelines in place to maintain the integrity of our measures. I would like to thank families for supporting our work in encouraging their young people to adjust to the changes in the day to day operations across the school site and maintaining a positive outlook and approach to their time in school. Our priority is the safety of our whole school community.

It has been a busy first full week back but we have all really enjoyed having all our students back in school. As I have been walking around school it has been fantastic to see how well all the students have been in engaging in their learning.

Please find below a range of updates.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and understanding in these 'new' times.

Yours Sincerely,

Catherine Holyland



Ms Catherine Holyland

Deputy Head Teacher / Director of Standards & Student Progress

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Free School Meals

We are aware that many families will have faced changes in financial circumstances over recent months. If your circumstances have changed your young person may now be eligible for free school meals. Where young people access free school meals as a school we are also allocated additional funding to support the teaching and learning of young people within this cohort. To find out more about how to apply for free school meals please see the Cheshire East website here:

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/free_school_meals.aspx

Getting to school

Thank you for keeping the school gates clear of traffic. Can we continue to ask that as far as possible students walk or cycle to school. If it is necessary to drive them to school please drop them off in the village and ask them to walk up to school.

Uniform

As students are currently unable to access their lockers at present we have explained to the students that they are able to wear their coat inside the building but they must remove it once they are in a classroom. The students have also been informed that hoodies cannot be worn as a substitute for a coat.

Information Evenings

In the week beginning the 14th September if you have a child in Year 8-11 you will receive a link to the year group Information talk. You will also receive an online form to complete for asking questions following the talk.

Visitors to school

Please be aware due to current health and safety reasons all meetings will be via telephone. Please do not come reception in the first instance make contact via the e-mail or telephone. Thank you for your understanding.

If your child forgets something please do not bring it to school for them, we will find a solution for them.

Home Learning

All home learning will continued to be set on Google Classroom. All students have a login to Google Classroom if they have forgotten their log in please e-mail support@phs.cheshire.sch.uk Using Google Classroom will strengthen the partnership between home and school which is so important in enabling students to make progress.

Absence

Where a student is unable to attend school due to illness or other sudden reason, parents should telephone the school, **Absence line 01625 871811 ext 217** or e-mail absence@phs.cheshire.sch.uk between 8.00am and 8.45am on the first day of absence, and on any days of further absence. The parents of students who are absent and for whom we have not received an explanation will be contacted to confirm the reason for the absence.

If your child shows any Covid symptoms your child must not attend school. Please inform school if your child is absent due to Covid symptoms. For us to ensure the school and wider community's health and safety it would be beneficial for you to share your child's Covid test results with us as soon as possible. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>

If at any point we believe your child is showing any symptoms of COVID 19 they must be immediately collected and they must go for a test before they can return to school.

Stegosaurus and a different kind of couch challenge

Having delivered information about poison, sandwiches, stegosaurus and iPads in 20 different assemblies at the start of this year (ask your young person if you need that random list explaining), I'm hopeful that all of our students, and a great many parents, will be aware that we are placing a real focus upon students' independent reading this year.

Independent reading is a strategy that we are confident can help students move forward and deepen their learning after an extended period of time out of school.

Our own reading of research tells us that:

Reading is good for your brain – it increases the blood flow and improves connectivity in the brain.

Reading introduces new ideas – it helps you detect patterns, solve problems and assimilate new information.

Reading makes you a better writer – you will unconsciously absorb techniques and vocabulary.

Reading improves your conversational skills – the knowledge you gain gives you lots to talk about.

Reading strengthens worldview and convictions – texts you agree with reinforce your ideas, whilst texts you disagree with broaden your perspective.

Reading improves your self-discipline and consistency – it forces you to form deep connections and builds your concentration.

Reading inspires you – reading a good book is like being around an inspiring person.

Reading reduces stress – reading can ease tensions in your muscles and heart.

As well as supporting our students' learning and wellbeing, independent reading is also important to us, as a whole school community, in practical terms.

Within our present circumstances, with students being kept safe in year group bubbles, it is teaching staff who are moving around the school from lesson to lesson rather than students. If we've learned anything over the last six months it's just how precious time in school is and therefore we want to make sure that all students are purposefully occupied during these changeover times. At these times, we want them to take some independent reading out of their bag and enjoy it, making the most of that time available to them, for all of the reasons I've listed above.

I know that being motivated to read can be a challenge for all of us, not just our young people, so it would be absolutely brilliant if we – school staff, parents, guardians, family members, friends – could make some time within our really busy lives and model the focus upon reading that we want for them: 'Be the change you want to see in the world', as I've read a few times.

Inspired by the 'Couch to 5K' challenge, I'm issuing a 'Couch and 5 Books' challenge: I'm challenging adults and students to read 5 books, maybe building up in length and difficulty,

over the next few months. I'm also challenging you to email into getreading@pfs.cheshire.sch.uk and tell us all about how you're getting on with the 'Couch and 5 Books' challenge so that we can celebrate the reading community that we're building.

A challenge that allows you to justify just sitting on the sofa - and justify it for a range of absolutely amazing reasons - what's not to like?

Good luck with the challenge!