



# Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope, as ever, that this letter finds you all safe and well. I have no doubt that you are likely to be extra busy at this time of the year, so I will aim to keep this letter brief and to the point.

I dearly wish for you, your children and our staff to have a wonderful, healthy Christmas and therefore it is vital that we all continue to do our bit to stay safe on the run-up. So please, if your child shows any of the symptoms we now all know about, do not send them into school next week, until they have been tested and have received a negative result.

We break up from school next Friday at 12.30pm. Please let us know in the usual ways if your child is off and awaiting results of a Covid-test up until that date. After that point, please read the following very carefully:

**If your child tests positive for Covid up until 24<sup>th</sup> December**

In line with Government instruction we received on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, **we will be contactable until the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, if your child tests positive for Covid-19:**

So, if your child tests positive for Covid-19 in the days immediately following the end of term, please email us at: [office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) with the following details:

1. Your child's full name and Form Group
2. Your name and contact number
3. The date their symptoms commenced (if they had any)
4. The date of the confirmed positive test

Please do not phone the school after the 18<sup>th</sup> December until the 4<sup>th</sup> January as there will be no-one in school to check the answerphone.

We will check this email inbox **at 11am each day**, up to and including the 24<sup>th</sup> December, after which positive cases will be dealt with via the NHS Test and Trace Service.

Where we are made aware of a positive case, our Covid response procedures will kick into place. If your child is identified as a close contact of an infected child, **we will contact you via text and email**, advising your child to self-isolate for the requisite number of days. Please do follow this guidance in line with the instructions under which we must all live at present.

Clearly we recognise that if we contact you, the news is likely to be unwelcome, but it is our responsibility to do as the Government requests in these circumstances in order to keep everyone safe and reduce the transmission of the virus.

If your child goes on to test positive at any other point during the holiday, or has to self-isolate due to someone in the family testing positive, you will not need to email us until Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, when we will next check the [office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) inbox. At that point, please let us know the date their self-isolation will end. If well enough to work, they will be able to access work from school.

On to other news...

### **Face Coverings**

As you know I asked all students and staff who could, to wear face coverings or visors from the beginning of November. I have no scientific proof, but it seems highly possible that doing so really helped to reduce transmission in school. Since the middle of November there have been no positive cases amongst either students or staff. I want to thank you too for supporting your child and the school in this – face coverings are not easy to wear, but they certainly seem to have helped us stay open and relatively unscathed compared with other schools. As we do not know what the holiday may bring in terms of further community-based transmission, we have asked your children and our staff to continue wearing their face coverings/visors until at least the 15<sup>th</sup> January, when we will review this again. As soon as it looks as if we can relax the rule, we will do so.

### **Progress report on the building of our new block**

Following months of planning, we are now at the point where work will begin on building the new 4-classroom block on our site. The contractors are likely to begin their work in January, with the building ready for use by September next year. To remind you, the funding for this block has been raised entirely by the Local Authority and not one penny of school money has been spent on it. We look forward to having use of more space for our children in the next academic year.

### **Christmas activities:**

Our students are enjoying getting involved in a variety of Christmas themed challenges at the moment, around the idea of “putting some sparkle back into 2020”. We thank you for the support and contributions that we are receiving from home. Next week they will be reflecting over the past year and what everyone has been through; we will be encouraging them to give members of their family and maybe some of their friends a ‘pay it forward’ gift or promise at Christmas, for being there for them throughout the uncertain times of 2020. Each gift is not allowed to be of any monetary value, instead it must be a gesture of kindness and support.

Currently each form time is producing a “Hamper for a home” in a decorated box; we are asking students to bring in donations of non-perishable food items to contribute to these. We will be giving these to the House of Bread. There is a competition between the form groups of each year to create the most festive hamper box and a prize will be issued to the best 2 hampers in each year. The deadline for these is Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

Finally on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December we will be having a non-uniform day in aid of Cambodia. The theme is “festive sparkle” and students are being asked to contribute £1 if they wish to participate.

### **End of term**

School finishes for all next Friday at 12.30 and will re-open on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January. Please ask your children to check their timetables, as they will need to come to school in their PE kits again, on the days they have it on their timetable. Other than those days, they are to wear full school uniform as normal.

### **And finally...**

At the end of a year which has certainly been the most challenging of my professional career, I want to thank every one of you for your support of the school and the ways in which we have navigated a pathway to now. Like you, I hope that the prospect of a vaccine will enable us to look forward to safer times next year, when we can, without fear, meet up with our families and friends. I wish you a peaceful, merry Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year.



**Lesley Beck**

**Exhausted but very proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School**