

18<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear parents/carers,

**Re: Potential closure to year groups**

I am writing to ask you to keep a close eye on school communications during the next few days, including at the weekend.

Over the past week, John O'Gaunt has been dealing with significant staff shortages due to illness, largely related to Covid-19. DfE guidance remains that school staff are required to self-isolate if they have symptoms or test positive. This means that they are away for at least 5 days. As I write, over one third of teaching staff and a small number of support staff are not in school. With Covid numbers rising rapidly nationally, many schools are facing similar challenges, and this has meant that agency cover staff have proved nigh on impossible to secure.

Consequently, during the last two days, we have had to take the difficult decision ask some students to work at home. We are monitoring the situation closely as you would imagine. As I write, the situation on Monday hangs in the balance. Some staff would be due back assuming they test negative and are well, but others have only just started their self-isolation and unless we can ensure the school can be adequately staffed, we may need to consider doing the same again.

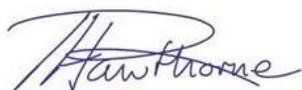
As I am sure you will appreciate, this is the last thing that we would want to do and we have been very fortunate over the past two years not to have to resort to these measures. However, we are duty bound to ensure we can offer safe and effective provision in school. Given the dynamic nature of the current situation, I am asking that all parents please keep a close eye on all school communications over the weekend and early on Monday morning.

We will communicate principally via Weduc, but will also issue messaging on our website, through Class Charts announcements and Twitter as a back up to this. Obviously, we will inform you as soon as we possibly can, but I ask for your understanding whilst we try to navigate an extremely challenging situation. We will be fully open if we can be and please assume that we are unless you hear differently.

Finally, to put your mind at rest, we continue to follow guidance carefully in school and have in place measures to help reduce transmission, such as regular cleaning, hand-sanitising and ventilation. Cases among our student population have in fact been relatively low and fairly stable this term.

Thank you in advance for your support and understanding. If you have any queries, then please do contact the school.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr R Hawthorne**  
Head of School