



Dear Parents and Carers,

28th September 2020

I wanted to write with some further information about our processes and plans following my notification of our positive COVID case over the weekend.

We have very clear processes where we work with the family to track contacts and make decisions about who needs to isolate - this is all guided by the advice of Public Health and the Department for Education.

For students who need to isolate we are setting work on Go for Schools. All students should be able to access their Go for Schools and their school email. If you know that your child isn't able to please contact Mr Course on DCourse@castlemanor.org.uk. Students will need to be able to at minimum access a smartphone mobile phone in order to complete their work and an increasing amount of home learning as we take advantage of learning during lockdown. We are surveying children to gauge their access to devices this week, but if you have a concern about your child being able to access online learning due to an issue with the internet or device please contact Mrs Horne on VHorne@castlemanor.org.uk.

If you are considering making a purchase of a device to support with school learning then I would recommend a laptop as being the ultimate device to be able to do everything. We are looking at a lease scheme in school to support families to access laptops without the large initial outlay. If you are interested in this scheme please contact Mr Messal on IMessal@castlemanor.org.uk. We would need 20 people to be interested. They would be on a monthly pay lease programme with an opportunity to buy at the end of the lease, and a total cost over time would be approximately £270.

Tablet devices are also very useful and provide opportunity for completion of school work. A model such as these, which we used during lockdown, provide the functionality that is needed, and it is not necessary to have an ipad.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Samsung-Galaxy-Tab-Wi-Fi-Inch/dp/B07W6QDF81/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=samsung+tab+a+8.0&qid=1600848551&sr=8-3

In school we are following all guidance and have our routines such as mustering, one way systems and year group bubbles for breaks and lunches. I wanted to remind you that masks are absolutely permitted to be worn in school, advised that it is only for movement between lessons but if you would like your child to wear a mask in lessons please contact me. Our movement around school is mostly outdoors and in fresh air and while that can continue we will not be bringing in any enforced mask wearing. However as the weather progresses we will review and if we get to the point where we have whole year groups mustering inside the building masks will become highly recommended.

We are staying outdoors for gathering and movement for as long as we can. Therefore please reinforce coat or waterproof wearing with students, and even bringing in umbrellas. The end of last week was testing with cold wind and showers but we made it through!

Unity Schools Partnership is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 07400386. The registered office is at Unity SP Offices, Park Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 7YD.

Headteacher: Mrs. Vanessa Whitcombe



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PE lessons remain outdoors too and Mr Dovaston wants me to remind you of this and also to add that 'under layers/ skins' can be worn underneath PE kit - the general expectation is that anything that has a Castle Manor logo remains on the outside, but if a long sleeved top or leggings is required underneath, this is no problem at all. We also do have Castle Manor tracksuits available through Kiiwii clothing.

Inside school we keep at least one window open in classrooms to ensure fresh air - this is another COVID response and it does mean that it can get chilly. So again I recommend thinking about whether children need to wear a t shirt under their shirt, or purchase a school jumper (available from Kiiwii) as an additional layer. Leggings or tights under trousers also provide a layer of additional warmth. We will keep reviewing over time but want to keep that fresh air circulating.

The police have been supporting us and other schools across the town with arrival and dismissal of students, which has been really helpful in reinforcing that children need to head off home and not be in big groups. We have separate entrances and line ups for students in the mornings which allows us to ensure that they all sanitise on entry, and the same exits which aims to spread students out. We have 700 in our community so it is not always easy.

Amongst all of this COVID related measures, I am so proud of the way our staff and children are adapting and getting on with some excellent learning. I had several really enjoyable walks around school last week and was so impressed with how 'normal' school feels too. Hard work in all of the lessons I saw, lovely Art, Dance, PE, DT and Catering lessons, all carefully adapted to make sure they follow the guidelines. We are very lucky that we have such a great staff team at all levels and I am very grateful. I am also very grateful to feel so supported by you all as parents in our community. There have been some rather interesting facebook posts about our school and other schools recently, and things work much better when we talk to each other and ensure we all understand what we are doing and why. Several of you I know have joined in to support me and the school and it is appreciated.

Another piece of normality is happening this week as students in Years 7-10 complete short GL assessment baseline assessments. We do these every year and they are nothing for students or parents to worry about, but are a really useful tool for us as it helps us to understand where children are and what we need to do to continue to support them in making excellent progress.

As ever please get in touch with us if you need anything at all. I am aware this is a very long letter again, thank you for getting to the end!

With my best wishes

Vanessa Whitcombe
Headteacher

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