

Weekly Parent/Guardian Newsletter

Week B

8 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian, welcome to this week's newsletter.

In-school COVID-19 testing

We have had a very successful first week of in-school testing, and I'm pleased to say that we have now offered Year 11 & 13 students their first two on-site tests. It has been great to see the students again and we are all very much looking forward to resuming normal school over the course of next week. You can find our testing and return to school schedule [here](#). My thanks to Mrs Hobbs' brilliant team of volunteers (a first rate team of parents, carers and friends of the school) for helping us to make this happen.

Alongside our other safety measures, this programme of testing (including home testing) is so important to the safe return of students. As Professor Calum Semple said to the BBC this week, regular testing in schools will be a 'game-changer':

"I think we're now at the stage where we can open the schools with extra measures: improved ventilation is going to be so important, face masks will help, and the lateral flow tests to identify the most infectious children."

Home testing for families and households of schoolchildren

The government has announced that all households with children of school age are eligible to get two rapid COVID-19 tests per person per week. The following is taken from GOV.UK:

As laid out in the government's roadmap, secondary school students will now be tested twice a week, receiving three initial tests at school or college before transitioning to twice weekly home testing. In addition to this, the government has confirmed twice-weekly testing using rapid lateral flow tests will be given for free to all families and households with primary, secondary school and college aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles, to help find more COVID-19 cases and break chains of transmission.

With about a third of individuals with coronavirus showing no symptoms and potentially spreading it without knowing, targeted, regular testing will mean more positive cases within households are found and prevented from entering schools and colleges, helping to keep educational settings safe.

Rapid testing detects cases quickly – in under 30 minutes – meaning positive cases can isolate immediately. This can be the difference between children being able to stay in school, or a class being sent home due to an outbreak.

*Professor Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director at Public Health England, said: **These rapid tests help uncover hidden cases of the virus and break chains of transmission, stopping outbreaks before they occur. Combined with other protective measures, they are a vital tool to help us lower infection rates and ensure that they stay low. I would encourage all eligible households to take up the offer of twice weekly rapid testing – it's quick and painless and could help save lives.***

All households with primary and secondary school and college age children, and childcare and support bubbles, will be encouraged to start regular twice-weekly testing as schools return. Tests will be available for adults in these households to collect on 1st March.

As with student testing, this is encouraged but not mandatory. A secondary PCR test will be required for positive lateral flow tests which are taken at home, either through at home PCR testing or at a local PCR testing site.

Getting a rapid test is quick and convenient. The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms will be delivered through:

- *testing in-person via workplace testing*
- *local authority test sites*
- *collection at a local PCR test site during specific test collection time windows*
- *a new home ordering service, launched on 1st March will allow people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home*

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should book a test [online](#) or by calling 119.

You can find out how to access a rapid test for your family/household [here](#).

Mr M Jones

Supporting your child with the return to school

Minimising Risk and Dealing with Anxiety

Whilst we have been sheltered in our homes, it is natural to feel some anxiety about venturing back into the wider world. As you will be aware, students of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason* applies. We are here to support our students and their families – we will work with you to support you as best we can so that students can start accessing face to face education with us again.

If you choose to keep your child off school and your child is not CEV, is not self-isolating and does not have covid, or any other illness, or any other pre-agreed absence, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.

***Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Students and Shielding**

We understand from the most recent government guidance ‘that many children identified at the start of the pandemic as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are not at increased risk of serious outcomes from coronavirus (COVID-19) and children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list (SPL) as appropriate, following review with a clinician.’ (Schools Coronavirus Operational Guidance February 2021)

If your child continues to be classified as clinically extremely vulnerable, you will have received a recent shielding letter.

The advice for pupils who have been confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable is to stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend school while shielding advice applies nationally. We will continue to provide remote learning for these students.

If your child is CEV, we would ask for you to contact the School Office to notify us of this at the earliest available opportunity, providing a copy of the shielding letter sent to confirm that they are advised not to attend.

Please find below a brief summary of some of the measures we will be using to minimise the risk with some suggestions of how students and their families can help us in this respect.

A full outline of our current protective measures can be found on the school website.

What we are doing in school to promote safety	What students and their families can do to help
Symptoms	
We are vigilant regarding symptoms in our students in school. Someone presenting symptoms will be sent home straight away or be supervised under strict guidelines provided by the government to make sure the risk of spread is minimised.	Stay at home if you have symptoms of the virus (use government guidance). Stay at home if you have been abroad following government guidance . Collect children as quickly as possible if you are asked to.
Testing	
Home testing kits provided to parents/carers collecting symptomatic children, and to staff who've developed symptoms at school (if unable to get a test elsewhere.)	Arrange a 'standard' coronavirus (PCR) test and inform the school if there is a positive result
3 lateral flow tests provided to students within school, then home testing kits for testing of students twice a week.	Carry out the home testing on Sunday and then on either Wednesday or Thursday. Staff will also carry out the home testing on Sundays and then on either Wednesday or Thursday.
2 lateral flow home tests per week offered to staff.	
We ask students and staff to share all test results with us, we'll keep accurate records of all results and will only share health records with the relevant people.	
Cleaning	
Deep cleans in the areas that a symptomatic person or student who has tested positive has been. PPE will be disposed of properly, following decontamination guidance .	
Cleaning staff will regularly clean frequently touched surfaces including: Banisters Bathroom facilities (including taps and flush buttons) Door and window handles Light switches Fingerprint scanners	Remember the basics of good hand hygiene and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' ethos. Avoid unnecessary touching of banisters/switches etc. Try opening swing doors with your elbow.
Teachers to wipe the teacher's desk and any shared equipment available on arrival e.g. remote controls, HDMI cables. Teachers will use their own pens and board-markers.	Don't touch anything in classrooms that is not your property unless directed by a member of staff.
Track and Trace	
Thorough records kept to enable us to track and trace contacts of a positive case.	We would ask parents to collect students as quickly as possible if you are contacted as part of track and trace procedures. Students should self-isolate as per the government guidance .
All close contacts to self-isolate in line with current government guidance.	
Work with the local health protection team if there are 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus is suspected. Advice given by the team will be followed.	

Hygiene	
Sanitisers at every entrance to the school and mounted on walls in the corridors.	Sanitise your hands every time you enter the building. Remember 'catch it, bin it, kill it'.
Promotion of good hand hygiene. Reminders given to students to sanitise wash and sanitise their hands frequently.	Wash your hands more frequently. Remember not to touch your mouth, eyes and nose.
Thorough cleaning at the end of the day.	
Shared resources, such as sports, art and science equipment, will be either: cleaned frequently and meticulously, and always between groups using them; or rotated so they can be unused and out of reach for 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different groups.	
Rooms will be kept well ventilated by keeping windows slightly open and opening more widely while unoccupied.	Bring extra layers if it is cold weather – acceptable layers include; plain black jumper, sweatshirt or hooded top (Dane Court PE Hooded tops are acceptable, any logos must be discreet), underneath and in addition to your blazer, not instead of; your coat over your blazer and sweatshirt.
Bubbles and social distancing	
Continued use of year group entrances and bubbles to reduce individuals mixing.	Use the same entrances used in Terms 1 and 2 to enter the building. Stay in your Year group areas and use the one way system. Take steps to stay further away from people in the corridors while moving around. Be proactive in protecting yourself. It is acceptable to request that someone stands further away if you are uncomfortable with their proximity.
Arrive at school from 8am and wait for the start of school in their inside or outside year group zones.	Consider staying outside and away from a busier communal space before school. Leave the building promptly at 3.20 and keep social distancing from those around you.
Reminders given to maintain distance and students should not touch staff or peers. If possible, students sit side-by-side and facing forwards.	Try your hardest to maintain the 2 metre distance between you and your friends when in school.
Teachers will try to maintain a 2 metre distance from students and other staff members; although this is not always possible, close face-to-face contact will be avoided, and time spent within 1 metre will be minimised.	Allow space for teachers in corridors. Where you are allowed to enter a room ready for a lesson, be seated when the teacher comes in.
The canteen will not be open during morning break. Lunchtime will be staggered to create two serving opportunities. Year groups will not mix whilst eating.	Consider bringing a packed lunch with you. Bring a bottle with a sports lid. Consider eating and socialising outside to give you more space from your friends and to provide natural ventilation.
Revised behaviour protocols will minimise unsafe student conduct.	Consider how you behave – be considerate of all those within our school community. If we see unsafe behaviour, we will challenge it to keep our wider community safe.

Face coverings	
Face covering will be promoted unless social distancing can be maintained or a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity (or they are exempt from wearing one).	We would strongly encourage you to wear a mask in school. Make sure you bring a mask to school (unless you are exempt). Follow government guidance on mask safety .
Spare face coverings available for anyone without one or has a covering that's unsafe.	Have a supply of face coverings ready at home. Keep a spare one in case one gets lost.
Lessons and Learning	
Textbooks and student exercise books will be subject to a quarantine period. We will aim to use electronic methods to mark work.	Bring all equipment you need for you own use; do not share your equipment with others.
Some lessons might have revised protocols; we will follow government's guidance for lessons involving drama, singing, chanting, shouting or playing instruments.	When working in groups in larger spaces, consider whether you can build in some extra distance from the peers you are working with.
Remote learning for students are shielding (*see notes below) or are self-isolating due to government guidance.	
Visitors	
Visitors will have guidance on physical distancing and hygiene explained to them on or before arrival. Visits will happen outside of school hours wherever possible. A record will be kept of all visitors.	Parent and carers should not to gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site unless they have a pre-arranged appointment. Consider whether you can email or call school instead. If you need to visit our reception, please sanitise your hands on entry and remain 2 metres away from others.
Meetings will be conducted by telephone or using video conferencing. Where this isn't possible, meetings will be conducted outside, outside of school hours, or in a room large enough to allow distancing.	

Support for students anxious about the return to school

Consider using our school website support page to explore possible ways to alleviate anxiety:

<http://danecourt.kent.sch.uk/parents8/wellbeing-and-mental-health>

The page includes help for students and directions for parents wishing to support their children.

Anxiety particularly linked to the return to school can be found here:

<https://www.priorygroup.com/blog/managing-children-s-fears-around-returning-to-school-after-coronavirus-lockdown>

If your child is experiencing extreme anxiety and you can foresee difficulties that we may need to address to smooth the transition back to face to face learning, please let Mrs Holmes and Mrs Ives know as soon as possible on holmes@danecourt.kent.sch.uk and ives@danecourt.kent.sch.uk. We will endeavour to work with you to address these issues.

Here is some specific advice from our colleagues at Thanet Inclusion Support Service. It is possibly aimed at parents of slightly younger children, but it does contain some useful advice if your child is worried about our return to school:

Preparing Your Child For the First Day Back in School

As schools begin to open to more children, parents and children may well be feeling anxious. Here's some ideas of how best to prepare.

Be Calm.

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact.



Be Curious.

These are strange times and their imagination may run away with them. Listen, and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling – "it's completely fine to feel like that at the moment" or 'I can really understand why you would feel like that"



Be Positive.

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe: washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space.



Be Thankful.

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to: being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities but be mindful some of these may not be available for them



Be Supportive

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety and may become tearful, clingy or act out. Reassure them that you will miss them too and think of them through out the day. It might be helpful to draw a little heart on their wrist and one on yours too. You can call it the hug button and when they find they are missing you they can press the heart and know that you will be doing the same at home. Sometimes having a little object to remind them of you through the day helps but please check this out with your school first.



Be Prepared.

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment since they were there last and rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practice your 'goodbye' routine and create a 'hello' greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.



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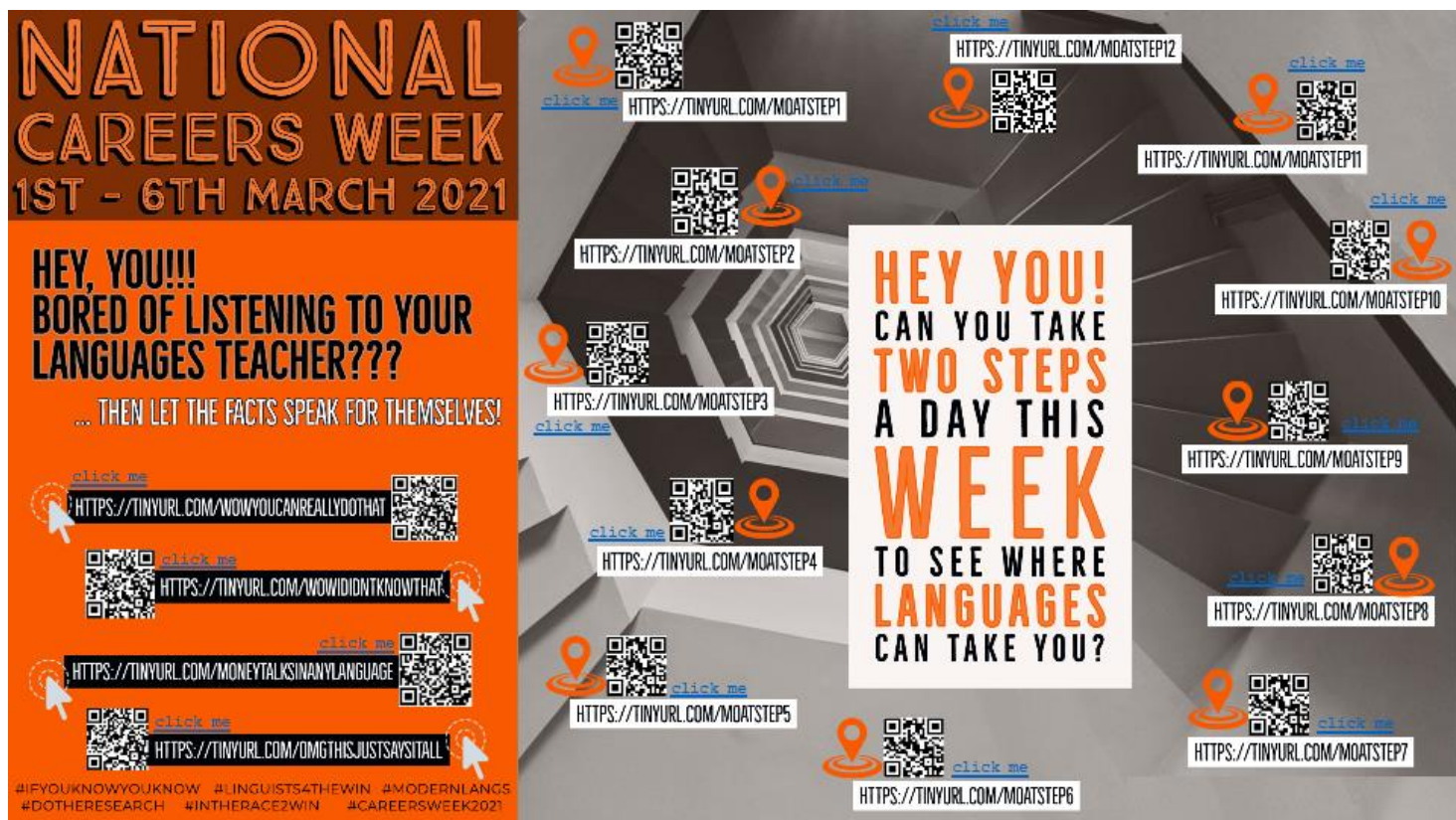
Other useful websites: www.Youngminds.org.uk www.Mentalhealth.org.uk www.Careforthefamily.org.uk www.England.nhs.uk

Click here for a short video in building resilience in children provided by the Kent Resilience Hub:
<https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/resources/resilience-webinar-for-parents/>

Where can languages take you?

As last week was National Careers Week, the focus from the languages department for the rest of this term is "Where can languages take you?". To start with for this week, we would encourage you to look at the links on the poster/pdf attached - you might find something interesting!

Mrs G Green



NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK
1ST - 6TH MARCH 2021

HEY, YOU!!!
BORED OF LISTENING TO YOUR LANGUAGES TEACHER???
... THEN LET THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES!

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#IFYOUKNOWYOUKNOW #LINGUIST54THEWIN #MODERNLANGS
#DOTHERESEARCH #INTHERACE2WIN #CAREERSWEEK2021

HEY YOU!
CAN YOU TAKE TWO STEPS A DAY THIS WEEK TO SEE WHERE LANGUAGES CAN TAKE YOU?

[click me](https://tinyurl.com/MOATSTEP1)
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MOATSTEP1](https://tinyurl.com/MOATSTEP1)

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GCSE Spanish and French students:

Dear Dane Court linguists, to aid your progress (if you are worried about the work you did throughout lockdown) we have put together a series of additional resources for you to watch.

Your class teachers will share this with you on your return to lessons in school. We look forward to seeing you next week.

Dane Court Staff Team Challenge

The Dane Court staff virtual challenge is coming along enormously well. After only 3 weeks we are almost half way round, completing 2438 miles. We have visited the Piazza Tasso in Sorrento and then The Temple of Apollo in Delphi. We have now started the long trek to Tallinn.

We have raised £615 so far for the Pilgrims Hospice in East Kent, which is fantastic.

Promoting good mental and physical health, whilst bringing the staff team together, and raising much needed money for an amazing charity is the aim of this challenge.

If you wish to donate the fundraising link is:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/dane-court-grammar-school?utm_source=whatsapp&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=dane-court-grammar-school&utm_campaign=pfp-whatsapp&utm_term=e0326b6de07a428991b7ae9f7a1ae726

Many thanks

The Dane Court well-being committee



1727 miles to
Tallinn



56 miles to
Helsinki



1372 miles back to Dane Court



Online Safety advice - Omegle “Talk to strangers”



Omegle has a minimum age rating of 13 years or older with parental permission needed for anyone under 18.

The app pairs random users to chat online via Text, Video or both. A user can also choose to add their interests, and Omegle will try to pair a user with someone who has similar interests as them. If not, it will pair people with complete strangers from anywhere in the world. Chats are completely anonymous unless the user states who they are, it's free and no account sign up is required.

Omegle does not have a system for moderation or reporting users due to anonymous connections which makes young people easy targets for online predators. Children and young adults may be asked by strangers to share their name, age, address, bank details, anything!

A recent BBC investigation revealed a vast amount of sexually explicit videos and live streams some featuring children as young as 7 or 8 which spread across the site during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the BBC's investigation, schools, police forces, and governments have issued warnings about Omegle in the UK. There have also been investigations into online child abuse on the platform along with reports of racism, extremist views, scams, and cyberbullying.

It's important to understand that Omegle connects kids with strangers of any age, so we would advise parents to consider restricting the use of the platform for all children under the age of 18.”

Mr S Lycett

Japanese Cooking Competition



- the deadline extended!

As it seems that more people would like to participate, the entry deadline for the Japanese Cooking Competition is extended until the end of Easter Holiday, Sunday 18th April.

Students can visit the Google classroom (the access code is shown in their form Google classroom) and see the lovely entries made so far there!

Thank you.
Mrs Meyers

A painting from year 7 Lockdown Gallery

The students have been looking at the work of the Impressionists, Post impressionists and their influence on David Hockney landscapes. They have looked at the use of realistic and abstract colours and mark-making, the emotional content of the work and have produced a response using whatever materials they have available.

Work is anonymous in case some people do not want to be identified.

