



Ref: NCS/ssd
Monday, 31 January 2022

Dear Parents & Carers,

As I am sure you will have seen in the news, many schools across the country are struggling to deal with the ongoing consequences of the COVID virus and the impact it has had on student and staff attendance.

At The Sittingbourne School, we too are currently experiencing high levels of staff absence. For the past few weeks, our staff have been working incredibly hard to ensure that this has not impacted on the provision our students receive. Staff have been using their free periods to cover lessons for absent colleagues, complete extra duties, provide support for students and deal with any parental questions. I have been very proud of the monumental effort put in by everyone who works at The Sittingbourne School, and for their determination to provide an excellent education for all our students.

However, with a recent significant increase in the number of our staff who have tested positive for COVID, we are now very close to the limit of what we can realistically offer. If the situation does not improve over the next few days, we may need to start asking whole year groups to work from home.

I know that this is far from ideal, and I would like to reiterate that we have worked tirelessly over the past few weeks to try and avoid this happening. But sadly, I now feel we have no option but to make significant changes to help us ensure our onsite provision is not compromised. If we do nothing, we run the risk of having too few staff to provide the necessary cover and this is a risk I am not prepared to take.

If we do need to introduce this measure, it is likely that we will ask a year group to spend one day at home (working on Google Classroom) while the rest of the school attends as normal. On the following day, a different year group would be asked to work from home. This would hopefully lessen the impact on our students and spread the disruption as fairly as possible. However, we will **not** be asking Year 11, Year 12 or Year 13 pupils to work from home, as they

need to be in school preparing for their upcoming examinations. Please note, should this situation arise, I will aim to give families a minimum of two days' notice.

Attendance for those year groups who are onsite will be incredibly important, as Subject Leaders will be adapting their curriculum to ensure the onsite lessons help to cover the gaps created by the additional time at home.

The next few days and weeks for the school will continue to be challenging, as we all continue to cover for our absent colleagues. I would therefore ask parents who have any non-urgent requests to bear with us, as it may take us longer to respond than it normally would.

I would like to thank you for your understanding during this time and for the support you have shown the school since we first started dealing with the consequences of COVID in our school community.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smith'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a smaller 'Smith'.

N Smith
Head of School