



# The Thomas Hardy School

Headteacher  
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Dear Parent/Guardian

We approach the end of a half-term like no other and I promised to write to you again to keep you updated. I begin with a massive thank you for all your support, understanding how difficult all of this is for parents and carers. Attendance has remained high since we returned in September and I am extremely grateful for the smart turnout of students. It is most important that standards of dress remain high despite the changed circumstances. It is worth reminding everyone that we only allow studs to be worn in the ear and we do not allow nose-studs at all.

We have tweaked and adjusted our plans as the term has progressed to make sure that we are staying alert and reducing risk wherever possible. We check websites in other schools and we visit other schools to make sure we are following best practice. It has led to continuous improvements in our procedures and also led us to discover better cleaning products with a longer lasting impact.

## DISTANCE LEARNING

You will be aware that several local schools have had to send students home on the discovery of positive cases. We have been practising and rehearsing our procedures in case we have to do the same. Once we report a positive case, most of the subsequent actions will be driven by advice from Public Health England, but we want to ensure that learning can continue even if students are isolating. I would like to meet head-on one issue around live learning. A myth has emerged that this is a simple thing to do and provides the answer to all our ills. As with so many things in our daily lives – an appointment with the doctor or the dentist, a shopping trip or a visit to the cinema – nothing is as simple or as satisfactory as it was before; nothing can replace actually being in school. Sitting in front of a screen for 5 hours, whether it is on a laptop or a telephone, is not the answer. Therefore, we will provide some live learning in every subject, every week but it will not be period by period. Live learning will be mixed in with some recorded lessons, and set assignments delivered through Teams. None of us would cope with being talked at for 5 hours on a screen with little chance of interaction in a large group of 25-30 people, so we should not expect students to be able to do so. The expert in distant learning is the Open University and they adopt exactly this approach – some live learning, some recorded, high quality learning materials and then face-to-face tutorials to reinforce learning and pick up any gaps. This is what produces resilient and independent learners. Teachers are also trying to refer to the bigger landscape to show how learning in a particular series of lessons fits together. This will enable students to follow instructions more easily if they are forced to have a period away from school.

## MASKS

One of the things we have encouraged this term is to be outside whenever possible, particularly during break and lunchtime. Unusually, we have opened the field at break as well as lunchtime to provide space. We will continue to do so but we are aware that the weather is changing and there will be days when students need to be inside.

**Therefore, students will need to wear masks after half-term when they are inside in communal spaces** such as corridors. There is no need to wear masks in lessons. Please remind them about the basic rules for wearing a mask: they need to have clean hands when taking their masks on and off and they must not touch it while it is being worn. It should be kept in a sealed bag or container when it is being stored. Can I also take the opportunity to remind **students who travel by bus that masks have been compulsory for some time and must be worn throughout the journey.**

Cont/d...

Leadership Team  
Mrs L Cheney BEd  
Mrs K Chittenden BA  
Mr I Cornell BSc  
Mr J Dean BSc  
Dr T Ennion BSc PhD  
Mr T Hardinge BSc MA  
Mrs L Morrison BEng



## **JUMPERS AND COATS**

As the weather turns colder we recognise that students may wish to wear an extra layer to school. Students are allowed to wear a plain black v-neck jumper or a plain black cardigan underneath their blazer. If they are wearing a blazer and the black jumper or cardigan and they are still not warm enough, they may wear an outdoor coat in lessons if their teacher gives them permission. At no point should the coat be worn in place of the school blazer or the black school jumper. During particularly cold weather they will be allowed to wear a coat over their blazer and jumper/cardigan if they are on the school field or one of the outdoor social areas.

## **PE KIT**

We are changing the arrangements for core PE and GCSE PE starting from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Students must now come to school in their normal school uniform and change into their PE kit in the changing rooms as normal. We have adapted our cleaning/hygiene routines to reflect this change.

Students will still be spending as much time as possible outside for PE and therefore it is important that they are warm and have an outside coat in case of rain. The new arrangements will mean that if students do get wet, they can change back into their uniform before their other lessons resume.

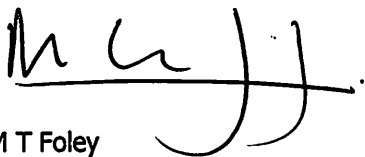
To clarify the expectations of PE kit, students should be wearing:

- Black bottoms (shorts, skirt or leggings).
- A white t-shirt.
- Black and red rugby top and sports socks.
- A raincoat or extra layer for bad weather.

## **HALF-TERM**

Half-term is 10 days away and you will have been aware for some time that we built in a two week break well before anyone had even heard of covid-19. Nevertheless, it has proved to be a most fortuitous decision. Alongside a very welcome break during the longest term, it will also create our circuit-breaker for the disease. I wish everyone a safe and restful holiday when it comes.

Best wishes



M T Foley  
Headteacher