

Dear students and parents

I hope this message finds you all keeping safe and well and certainly the autumn term at Collyer's has progressed in a very positive way since I last wrote to you in late October. Last weekend we welcomed many Old Collyerians to the college for their annual Winter Reunion and I was able to share with them how resourceful and resilient our community has been in the face of recent challenges and how delighted we all are to have returned to a more normal set of arrangements. The Old Collyerians' Association have very kindly gifted to the college a lovely Christmas tree to bring festive cheer, which is centrally located in the foyer of the Duckering Hall for all to enjoy.

Our Covid safety arrangements at Collyer's have been carefully maintained since the start of term with the support of students, parents and staff. Most recently we have started to implement our CO₂ monitors provided by the government and these have shown so far that all areas are safe and highlighted the importance of having good ventilation. Through this audit we have decided to reduce slightly the amount of seating in the Undercroft and move this to the interim Café. Please could students keep doing their best to consider social distancing when not in lessons and make use of all the available social areas around the college at busier times. At Collyer's we have continued to experience manageable levels of positive cases throughout September, October and November. However positive cases, particularly in younger school age ranges, both locally and across other districts of the county, have been high.

Yesterday the Director of Public Health for West Sussex wrote to all secondary school and college headteachers to advise requiring face masks in communal areas as an additional contingency plan measure to help respond to the case rates. We will support this advice – and I am therefore asking all students, staff and other visitors from tomorrow (Thursday 25th November) to ensure they wear a face mask in corridors, in social and catering areas when not eating or drinking, in reception and in the library when moving around. Masks will not be required for those exempt or for anyone in classrooms, although of course individuals may choose to wear masks in class as well. We will review this additional arrangement in the new year.

I know you will all understand that we aim to err on the side of caution with our Covid measures and do our very best to keep our college community and the broader community around us as safe as possible. I am grateful therefore for your understanding and support with this change, and will update the usual FAQs and Risk Assessment on the college website as soon as possible.

Finally, and with a heavy heart, I would usually be writing to you all this week to invite you to our Christmas Carol Concert at St. Mary's Church. Instead, given the case rates locally and across West Sussex and the most recent advice regarding Christmas events from WSCC, you will understand that we unfortunately need to cancel this year's event. It would have been great to meet everyone, sing carols together and hear our fantastic musicians – but I am sure brighter times are ahead soon when this will be possible.

In case I should not be writing again this term, I would like to wish everyone in our community a safe and restful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind regards

Dan Lodge
Principal