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Dear families

It has been a pleasure to welcome staff and students back to school this week after the half term break. The theme of this week's assemblies was Remembrance, and the historical significance of 11<sup>th</sup> November to mark the sad human cost of conflict across the world. As with many assemblies, it linked to our student council "More In Common" pledge: "We believe that there is more that unites us and we have more in common than that which divides us. We achieve better if we celebrate the diversity of our school community and work together to make it a better place." This has particular resonance at a time when we are being asked to work together as a community to look after each other.

### **Update on guidance for schools relating to coronavirus**

We cannot stress enough the importance of students coming to school, for their education and future life chances, by those who are healthy and not told to stay at home by track and trace. While the majority of industries and many of our friends and family have been told to work from home as of yesterday, those who work in education settings are working to keep schools open for this reason. We do so because we are committed to the importance of education and to the young people that we work with. However, this carries with it some risk particularly to some staff. Please support us in keeping everyone healthy by doing the following:

- Repeating the messages about regular handwashing, face coverings and maintaining distance from others: "**Hands, face, space**"
- Staying at home if anyone in the house has coronavirus symptoms or tests positive for coronavirus, or if you are contacted by track and trace. Those who test positive need to stay at home for 10 days, and others in the household or close contacts should stay at home for 14 days.
- Following the new rules about how we all behave to protect the health of others.

We have received the following guidance from the Department for Education, effective from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November. This is currently to last until at least 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

### **Face coverings**

- Face coverings are now mandatory in communal areas of secondary schools and colleges in England. They will still not be recommended in classrooms. At William Ellis, this means that students must wear them in corridors. Those who have an exemption from a facemask should have a note in their planner signed by a parent or family member. Students should continue to wear face coverings on public transport.
- Any visitors to the school should wear a facemask on entry, and continue to do so until they are invited to remove it.

## Attendance to school

- Both staff and pupils who have been identified by their doctor as still considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), will be advised not to come into school or college. This is only for students who have received a letter to say that they are in this category – **all other students who are well and not isolating must continue to attend school as normal**. Pupils and staff who live with people who are CEV, but are not CEV themselves, are still expected to come into school or college.
- Our Year 9 parents' evening on 12<sup>th</sup> November has been postponed and will now be an online event. We are sending further details to Year 9 families.

## Curricular and extra-curricular activities

- Unfortunately, the guidance on amateur sport and recreational activities suggests that all clubs and enrichment activities must stop. We are saddened by this and we know the students are too – it is an important part of William Ellis life. As soon as we receive the go-ahead we hope to re-start clubs and activities in line with the previous timetable.
- We are further minimising contact between students by returning to only having online assemblies for the next half term. These assemblies are recorded for the whole school and delivered on screen in tutor rooms.

I hope that when I write to you with next week's newsletter it will return to a focus on the educational activities in school and the positive achievements of our students.

Yours faithfully



Izzy Jones