

October 2021

Headlines

Dear Parent/Carer

We have almost arrived at the end of, what has been an action packed and mostly successful, half term. Unfortunately, it hasn't been without its challenges as attendance of students and staff has been impacted, though we are not alone in this – most schools in Swindon are reporting a similar picture. We have struggled at times to source supply teachers who themselves have been ill or requested by many other schools and on Sunday, the situation got much worse and we had to make the difficult decision to close the school to two year groups. That said, on the whole, it has been good to get back to some semblance of normality and many of our events have gone ahead as planned.

It has been recommended by our local public health team that **for the next fortnight following the holiday** we should increase our Covid measures as follows:

- We will be halting all live assemblies and going back to virtual assemblies
- All students will be required to wear a mask in corridors when moving around lessons and in communal areas, unless your child is exempt, in which case they should wear their exemption lanyard.
- Any upcoming events will be held virtually, as far as possible, and we will keep you updated on these.

Please ensure your child has a mask with them to wear in school; we will not be requiring students to wear masks in class unless they wish to do so. Also, we would urge you to continue to test during the half term holiday and particularly before returning to school after the holiday, and if your child tests positive to stay at home and book a PCR test. We haven't yet had a date for our vaccinations within school however, when we do, we would ask that you engage with the testing as this will hopefully help us to remain open and reduce the number of students and staff becoming ill with the virus.

On a positive note, we are delighted that one of our teaching assistants, Ms Crisp was nominated for and won the Teaching Assistant of the Year Award by Teaching Personnel and received a fantastic prize of a tablet, certificate and trophy. Ms Crisp goes above and beyond to support not only our SEND students but anyone who needs it and she is, in our opinion, a worthy winner. You can see details on [our school website](#). We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to two much loved teaching assistants at half term; Mrs Woodward and Miss O'Connor. Both are going to work for the NHS and we wish them every success in their new roles. We are in the process of recruiting for these roles so if you do know anyone who may be interested, please direct them to our website.

You may have noticed that we have a brand new school website which we hope will make things a lot easier to find. On the front page as you scroll down you will see our latest news and if you click on the [Latest News](#) page you will see everything that has gone on in school since September, which demonstrates the many opportunities on offer here at Dorcan. In particular, we have held our WOW days for our new Year 6 students and our Open evening which was really well attended with excellent feedback given; A Science Family fun event and Coffee morning also for new Y5 and 6 students; our Pencelli outdoor pursuits trip; a Highly Able trip to Merton College, Oxford and an Art and Music trip to Wiltshire College; several virtual evenings covering use of educational Apps, Use of the Knowledge organiser and Core skills; and Speakers in Schools to talk to students about their careers and

experience. We are also now running a full extra-curricular programme for all our students and I would really encourage your child to attend at least one club if they are not already doing so.

We wish you a safe, restful and happy holiday and would ask that students do not do anything over the holidays that contravenes our uniform policy and would prevent them from accessing lessons on return, for example, in terms of hairstyle, colour, nails, piercings etc. Thank you for your support with this.

Next term starts on **Monday 1 November** and is a normal school day.

Please find attached a copy of a press release from South Swindon MP Robert Buckland regarding a colouring competition which may be of interest. (see below).

Yours faithfully



Mrs Bareham
Headteacher



South Swindon MP Robert Buckland Launches Christmas Colouring Competition

South Swindon MP Robert Buckland has launched a Christmas Colouring Competition.

The competition will help to raise money for the charity Alzheimer's Society as part of Elf Day 2021.

Robert is asking as many children as possible to get involved and colour in a Christmas Elf in return for a small donation to Alzheimer's Society <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/elfday-robertbucklandmp>

The competition has four categories – Children aged 5 years and under, 5 to 8 years, 8 to 11 years and 11 plus years.

Robert said:

"I am calling on children here in South Swindon to join in the festive fun this Elf Day and enter my colouring competition.

"I can't wait to see all of your fantastic pictures!"

Each winning entry will receive a personalised Elf Certificate from Robert.

You can receive your Elf to colour in by emailing Robert at robert.buckland.mp@parliament.uk

Please post your entry to Robert Buckland MP, 29b Wood St, Old Town, Swindon, SN1 4AU

All entries must be received by 3rd December 2021 Elf Day.

Ends

Dementia in Swindon – The facts

Here in Swindon, there are around 2,700 people with dementia, 1,620 of whom are living with severe dementia.

By 2030, the number of people with dementia in Swindon is set to rise to 3,910; 2,520 of whom will have severe dementia, meaning they will need significant support from the social care system.

The NHS estimates that there are around 1,130 people with dementia in Swindon who are undiagnosed.