



## **Principals' Letter – Autumn Term 2020 Week Ending 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

We are certainly in the traditionally most challenging time of the year for schools; with everyone getting tired and the end of term not being close enough to get excited about the holiday season. This is compounded by the quite understandable worries that many people have. We have received the same question from several of you about the announcements by the government regarding the end of lockdown and specifically Christmas. Which amounts to:

“We are pleased that we will be able to get together with the rest of our family for Christmas following the announcement that three households can meet but how can it be safe if my child is still mixing with over 1000 others in school up until the 18th?”

It is impossible to give any assurances that your young person will not pick up the virus at the end of term and, because children often do not show any symptoms, you may not know if they have. It has been a challenge to keep our young people with any form of social distancing but the introduction of masks at movement times has helped and we have still had relatively few diagnosed cases amongst the students. The facts are that with approximately 1500 people in one building all day the risk of passing infection in those with Covid but with no symptoms is present. Staff, of course, have the same concerns about their ability to see their families safely.

We have had relatively few cases across the school but the two positive cases at the very end of last week, amongst some of our youngest students, highlights how difficult it is to predict anything at the moment. Quite understandably we had more of you make contact as you were concerned that your child should be self-isolating than we have had previously; the thought of telling any family that they need to self-isolate for 14 days in the last week of term is not something we are wishing for!

There has been a significant number of parents/carers inform us that their child's last day in school will be the 11th December. The reason given is that this gives the two-week period they need to ensure that Christmas Day is safe after limiting contact with others for the two weeks leading up to it. We understand the desire to see relatives and to spend time together as a family and want to ensure that our students do not miss out on further learning if at all possible. Others of you have stated that your child will be in school until the 15th December to give 10 days clear before Christmas Day for the same reasons.

Having a significant number of students at home can cause issues with lesson planning etc so we have been looking at ways that we can ensure that we do not have students accessing different work that would cause issues for lesson flow and course coverage after the holiday. A blended approach to learning will avoid many of the difficulties with students covering the same content whether at home or in school. Therefore, we are currently preparing work packs for students that will cover key content for the last week of term. The work set will be a key aspect of learning in each subject and will be

focussed on in lessons when students return in January. This means that if they do not understand a particular aspect there is no need to worry as we will revisit it in class in January.

From the 16th December we will be asking students to complete the work in the learning packs in school lessons to support all our young people being in the right place for the start of next term whilst disadvantaging no one.

We hope that you can see that we are attempting to give you as much support to make the best decision for your own individual circumstances. We have seen the impact of the current situation on the mental health of many in our community and the increased anxiety levels in the latest lockdown have been obvious. We do not want anyone to have a positive test in that last week of term and mean that families cannot get together and for that to mean others must self-isolate too. As always, if you have any questions do contact the relevant member of staff for your young person.

**Anti-bullying Video:** Some of our Year 10 GCSE Drama students were involved in creating a video for anti-bullying week, last week, that was shared with the whole school during registration on Friday 20th November, to finish the week off and enable valuable tutor time discussions. The students did an excellent job of working efficiently during the recording of both the video and voice-overs and gave up a considerable amount of their time to complete the project on a short deadline. It offered them a great insight into the world of campaign videos and the responsibility actors must maintain moral standards to support the work they are being 'employed' for. As well as giving them the experience of acting for camera, a different discipline than acting for theatre.

Students involved were **Joshua Brown, Shane Shaw, Ben Vessey, Louise Turner, Kai Doyle, Zak Simpkins, Amal Khalid** and **Harrison Meadows**. A big well done and thank you for their dedication and effort. A big thank you to Miss Hutchinson for recording and editing the final video. The video can be seen on Passmores Academy's Youtube Channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGrNtiBFgfc>



### [THINK: An Anti-bullying week video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGrNtiBFgfc)

A small group of our Year 10 students have created this short video exploring the impact of bullying and social media. Music credit: I Giorni by Ludovico Einaudi [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

**Supporting the NHS:** Our continued thanks go to the wonderful NHS Staff & Donor Carers (redeployed from other industries due to Covid-19) for taking care of one of our staff family members at the Westfield Pop-Up Plasma Donation Centre. NHS staff have asked her to spread the word that even with just symptoms but no +test you can still apply.



 [uk.westfield.com](http://uk.westfield.com) › service-detail

## NHS Plasma Donation Centre Westfield Stratford City

If you are interested in becoming a plasma donor , NHSBT is asking people who have recovered from COVID-19 to get in touch on 0300 123 23 23 ...

**Tassomai:** This week's Science Tassomai champions are:

Year 11 :       Melissa McCall  
                  Grace Evans  
                  Sasha Newnham  
Year 10:        Hansa Bachoo  
                  Freddie Thornton  
                  Kyran Ackerman-Mond

### **Year 11 Information:**

**Year 11 – Post 16 applications:** This is a really important time for all our year 11 students as they start to consider their options for next year. All students have access to Mrs Kay, Careers Adviser, who is in school every Wednesday and Thursday. Students can book an appointment to discuss their plans and the options open to them and ask Mrs Kay any questions about leaving school. In tutor time, students have been shown various online presentations from local sixth forms, colleges and apprenticeship providers and have been made aware of forthcoming virtual open days for local further education institutions. We would advise our year 11s to apply to colleges and sixth forms by the end of this term, where possible. I have listed the closing dates for applications for local sixth form providers:

Herts & Essex Sixth Form – Closing date 30th November

The Bishops Stortford High School – Closing date 11th December

Presdales Sixth Form – Closing date 11th December

St Marys Catholic School Sixth Form – 11th December

Epping St Johns Sixth Form – Closing date 15th January (extended from 16<sup>th</sup> December)

Joyce Frankland Sixth Form – Closing date 16th December

Birchwood Sixth Form – Closing date 17th December

Leventhorpe – Closing date 18th December

Hills Road Sixth Form – Closing date 12th January

St Marks Sixth Form – Closing date 5th February

Hockerill Anglo European School – Closing date 12th February

If students are worried about their next steps and would like more help with their decision making or as a parent, you would like to ask questions about post 16 opportunities, please email [j.kay@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:j.kay@passmoresacademy.com)

**Open Dates:**

Tuesday 24th November – Epping St Johns Sixth Form, 6.45pm (Virtual)

Thursday 26th November – Helena Romanes Sixth Form (virtual)

**Apprenticeships – Parents Guide:** Amazing Apprenticeships have put together these monthly guides about apprenticeships specifically for parents <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parents/>



Natalie Christie & Vic Goddard  
**Co-Principals of Passmores Academy**



TEACHarlow

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Interested in becoming a primary or secondary teacher?  
Contact Gareth Walsh on [g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com)