



Diary Dates

7/9/20	School starts for all students entry times Year 5 – 9:00am – 2:30pm Year 6 – 8:55am – 2:25pm Year 7 – 8:50am – 2:20pm Year 8 – 8:45am – 2:15pm
26/10/20	Half Term
2/11/20	Students return to school
2/11/20	MAT Consultation deadline
4/12/20	Occasional Day
4/01/21	Inset Day
5/01/21	Spring Term begins

Please make sure you read the end of the newsletter which contains important information for all parents and the community.

What is happening to the timing of the school day from half term?

We will be returning the 15 minutes necessary to the school day **after half term**. We will still be using staggered start and end times to aid social distancing and congestion as students leave the school site. Freman College have shortened their school day, now finishing at 3pm, therefore, Edwinstree students will not have to wait so long before catching their bus. Further information regarding the new timetable which will confirm the new entry and exit times for all year groups to follow.

The timetable is really hard for many students and is missing some of the curriculum. Are there plans to change it?

We were preparing to change the timetable to allow time slots to return the whole curriculum to each year group in a two week session. However, following the first positive Covid-19 case in school, we learnt that if we change to this timetable the number of teachers required to self-isolate, based on the 48 hour period, would be up to 7 on some days. This would leave the school struggling to operate. Therefore, we have made the decision to remain with our current timetable to minimise the lockdown effect to students. It also limits us to only 4 members of staff needing to self-isolate at any one time from a class lockdown. What we plan to do is swap over subjects later in the year, so that all students experience the curriculum during a year. Further information about this after half term.

Lunch times and break times are short and my child is still finding it difficult in their class bubble and out on the field, are their plans to change?

Breaks are short as this is the time that remains the biggest risk to a child spreading Covid-19. Students will hear next week that they will be moving post half term to predominantly the hard surface for their breaks and lunch and they will have 20 minutes to eat lunch in the classroom and 15 minutes to play outside.

We will be using all the hard surfaces we have available to keep students off the field at break and lunchtime and students will be outside on a rota system. This is being trialled next week ready for implementation after half term. With the onslaught of winter, we are preparing for many more wet breaks. Please make sure students arrive well prepared for cold and wet weather. Many will want to go out even in light rain for the break. Can we please remind again that a spare of shoes will be required after half term? Please remember, any coloured coat, scarf, gloves and hat are acceptable in school.

Is the school likely to close at any point?

If a positive Covid-19 case occurs in school currently only a class is most at risk, not a whole year group. Our biggest risk to a year group and/or school closure is based around staffing rather than students, currently we have five members of staff in self-isolation. If we reach a figure of 7 – 8, we are getting close to not being able to function affectively. We also run the risk of not being able to staff the school with supply teachers. In the event we have to make the decision to lockdown, we will look at year groups and the decision will be based on which teachers are in and the bubbles (year groups) the teachers are in. We are unable to move a teacher out of their year group bubbles, which makes any supply support even harder. Please make sure you have a back-up plan for any lockdown of a class, year group and or school. As you will be aware, Covid-19 is not something we can predict. Wherever a lockdown occurs, core learning first and then foundation will be placed on the SMHW site, so students can continue their learning. In the event of a Government decision we will return to our summer method of distributing work and assessments.

Are there any other reasons my child might be asked to self-isolate?

Out of hours clubs generate a greater risk to your child of having to self-isolate. Do make sure you are clear how the clubs are operating and their Covid-19 safe procedures to minimise contact. We want students to have a full and

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enriched experience, but make sure that you are aware of the extra risks of mixing with children from different year groups and schools.

If my child is self- isolating where can I find the work?

Please make sure you have accessed SMHW as all distance learning is placed on the classwork section of the SMHW. If you can't access it, we can provide hard copy on request, but this vehicle is really helpful. We are prioritising core first and then other subjects.

Where is the fun for my child in the school? This was something your middle school recognised as important?

You are right and it is harder to achieve under Covid-19. Next week students will experience a relaxed and small Fullness Day, they will have an opportunity to design their rooms and to explore the key value of 'compassion'. In the meantime the students have been working on two competitions this term, KS2 to compose a song, and KS3 to work as a team to learn a dance. They will win a film treat and with popcorn on a Friday. We will continue to make sure we provide opportunities for students to work as a team. KS3 in particular, had the loudest laughter this week as they prepared for the dance off! This was lovely to hear and there was a moment of them finding their childhood again, we need to create more of this!

How will we stay safe over the winter months?

We checked again the national and local guidance and it is clear that we need to make sure we have windows open in the school. Therefore, the school will, even with heating on to warm the school up, be colder than normal. We will be supporting students to wear their warmest clothing and outdoor wear. Please remember we don't mind the colour of the coat, or hats, gloves and scarfs. Please be prepared that if we have a cold winter, we will move students to non-uniform and the warmest clothing they have to support all of us to stay warm in school. If we get a very cold spell I will automatically move to this.

How is my child settling in and how well are they doing in their learning?

Without the interference Covid-19-19 (and we cannot guarantee this) we are looking to complete a full Herts for Learning assessment of students in mid-November, this will be kept at a low stakes level to minimise stress and to maximise their ability to do their best in each subject. Subsequent to the results of this data,

we plan to send you your first Data Report. In early December, we also plan an opportunity for you to email and get a response from any subjects in which you have concerns, and or book a telephone consultation appointment. The students have adjusted well and re-engaged with learning and are settled. We would have already contacted you if there were concerns our end. If you perceive a worry, do not hesitate to contact your Head of Year.

Hoy5@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

Hoy6@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

Hoy7@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

Hoy8@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

They are working exceptionally hard to communicate with you and help resolve any issues.

Year 8 Science

Year 8 science lessons for the next 3/4 weeks will be about the anatomy and physiology of reproduction. This supports and adds to the work that they have recently undertaken in PSHCE. This is core curriculum and is usually taught at the end of Year 7. However, I felt it was better left until most students were back in school. If your Year 8 child is not in school for their science days, please can you make sure that they complete the distance learning about this subject? Ms Sanders, Leader of Science

Flu Immunisation – Nasal Drops

Those students unable to take part in the flu immunisation this week, can be immunised on our catch up day, booked for Thursday 26th November 2020. Please ensure you return the completed form to the school office.

Are we a Nut Free School?

Please refrain from putting nuts, or food containing nuts in packed lunch boxes, as we have students with allergies in the school and these are severe.

RAISE RESILIENCE - Helping Children Thrive Into the New Normal

A six-session course with worksheets

The coronavirus has forced children and families to deal with uncertainty head on. As you continue adapting to the new normal, you, and your children may be anxious for a whole host of reasons - leaving you and them feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or exhausted. Please see attached flier for more information.

Recruitment – We are currently recruiting for teaching and support staff, please visit our website for more information.

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What are the proposals for the Future of Edwinstree?

The Governors would like to announce the formal Consultation process for Parents, which will take place from 16/10/20 until 2/11/20

We would like to consult you about two proposals. Firstly for Edwinstree Middle School to become a Single Academy rather than a Local Authority school and secondly, for the school to enter into a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with Freman College, in the first instance. Attached is a letter from the two Chairs of Governors with regard to this process. The timescale for this process may alter but the plan is that by this time next year we will be an Academy within the Trust.

How will we help you to understand what this means and the impacts?

Below are two links to the Government guidance which begin to give you an understanding of what we are proposing. A Powerpoint Presentation will be available to view on our website next week, explaining what this means for Edwinstree and the full reasons behind our decision making. Once you have viewed the presentation, we will invite questions and comments to the school. All questions and concerns will be collated ten days after the closing date, when we will publish our response. The closing date for the Consultation is 2/11/20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-single-academy-trust>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust>

The Diocese has been consulted on the proposal and supports our application.

Jo Gant
Headteacher
MAT Letter
Resilience flier

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