



---

# Blackminster Middle School

## School Bulletin

---

**12/02/2021**

Dear parents and carers,

### **Half term**

School will be closed to all students for half term next week. We reopen for the children of key workers on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Ready Steady Worcestershire**

Ready Steady Worcestershire provides information about food, activities and support available to families during the school holidays. We recognise some families find it difficult to feed their children during the school holidays. By clicking the interactive map link, you can find organisations in your local area that can provide families with either food items to cook a meal at home or prepared meals for children during the school holiday period. We also recognise that when children do not have the structure and routine provided by being in school, keeping children active and entertained can prove difficult. The interactive map shows activities taking place in local communities during the school holidays. The webpage also contains lots of activity ideas which can be done at home, particularly useful if the family is self-isolating. School holidays can be a demanding time for parents financially, as well as in terms of managing household stress, relationships and mental wellbeing. Included on the website there are lots of help, ideas and support available for families to make the most of the extra time together and to ensure children are ready to go back to school.

For more information visit: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/readysteadyworcs](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/readysteadyworcs)

### **Here2Help**

I've been asked to share this reminder that Here2Help is here for families self-isolating and unable to get support from friends, family or neighbours.

On the Here2Help website families can find resources to help with staying at home during Coronavirus as well as an online form they can fill out to request the support they need. If the family does not have internet access, they can call 01905 768053 which is open Monday to Thursday, 9am-5pm and Friday 9am-4.30pm. Here2Help will signpost callers to up to date advice and arrange volunteer support where required to help those who are unable to leave their homes as a result of needing to self-isolate.

The types of support available include:

- Collecting and delivering food and supplies
- Arranging emergency food support
- Help collecting prescriptions
- Help with other commitments such as pet needs
- Support for those who are feeling isolated
- Advice around money, benefits and debt

### **Dates for your diary**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February – 19<sup>th</sup> Friday – Half Term

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March – PDD Day, Closed to students

For more information visit: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help)

## Update of South African Covid variant

Schools have been asked to pass on this message on behalf of Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director of Public Health for Worcestershire

I'm sure by now you'll be aware that a small number of cases of the South African Covid variant has been identified here in Worcestershire, in the WR3 area. I'd like to reassure you all that at the moment, we have no evidence to suggest that this variant is any more severe than others or that the regulated vaccine would not protect against it. You should continue to follow lockdown rules and social distancing guidance at all times. These remain the best ways to reduce the spread of the virus. The testing of residents over the age of 18, living or working in the WR3 and WR9 postcode areas, is now underway to try to prevent the spread of the virus. As there do not appear to be any links to travel, this suggests there may be some small amount of spread locally in these areas.

A testing site has been set up at The White Hart Pub in Fernhill Heath and a second site at Sixways Stadium. This is also for residents of the identified postcodes and only for people who have no symptoms and who are over 18 years old. Testing allows us to identify people who may not even know they have Covid, so that they can quickly self-isolate and keep others safe from the virus. It is fantastic to see so many residents wanting to do this.

I should also add that testing is going to be available for two weeks, so there will be plenty of time to book and be tested over the coming days. You should be told within 24-72 hours if you have tested positive for Covid-19. If you are positive, please self-isolate immediately for 10 days. Testing for the variant takes 7-10 days after the initial result is received. If you would like to check if you should get a test, the postcode checker and booking link is available here on our website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVID19variant>

If you are around the boundary of the affected postcodes and your postcode is not listed as one included in this specific variant testing and are at all concerned, you can easily access rapid Covid-19 testing also known as Lateral Flow Testing (LFT), which is available around the county.

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVIDtesting](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVIDtesting)

We've produced a set of FAQs about the variant. It might be worth you spending five minutes reading them so click here: [https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20872/covid-19\\_variant/2363/covid19\\_variant\\_faqs](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20872/covid-19_variant/2363/covid19_variant_faqs)

The sites at Sixways and the White Hart at Fernhill Heath can be booked by visiting:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVID19variant>

## Mental health resources

Following on from last week's Children's Mental Health Week, the DfE have posted on their blog some useful links and sources of support so that children, parents, carers, and school and college staff can get the advice and help they need.

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/01/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/>

## Live lessons timetable week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> February

Along with this newsletter I'm attaching the timetable for live lessons during the first week back after half term. You will notice that we've added a short check-in for students at 9am each morning to meet with

## Dates for your diary

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February – 19<sup>th</sup> Friday – Half Term

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March – PDD Day, Closed to students

their tutor and review tasks for the day. We hope that this will set students up for a day of remote learning and help to answer any questions.

As ever, we are grateful for your feedback on how our remote learning provision is working for your children and your family. Please email me directly on [lmcquone@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:lmcquone@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk) if you have any questions or concerns.

### Staff emails

Staff emails all take the same form – [FirstInitialFamilyName@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:FirstInitialFamilyName@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk). For example, I'm Linda McQuone so my email address is [lmcquone@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:lmcquone@blackminster.worcs.sch.uk). Staff may be somewhat less immediately available than earlier on during lockdown as they are now delivering more live sessions, but will get back to you as soon as they can. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can help.

### Finally....

I'd like to thank all of our families for their tremendous support for the students and for the school over this period of lockdown. It's often said that the worst of times bring out the best in people, and that's certainly been true of our wonderful school community.

We're all looking forward to hearing the government's plans for fully reopening schools and for being able to welcome our staff and students back to site as soon as we can.

In the meantime, I wish you and your family a restful half term.

Kind regards,



Linda McQuone  
Acting Headteacher

### Dates for your diary

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February – 19<sup>th</sup> Friday – Half Term  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March – PDD Day, Closed to students