



2 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the close of the autumn term, I can confirm that school will finish as usual at **3.00pm on Friday 18 December 2020** and that the Yellow Bus service will operate at this time. The start of the new academic year is **Monday 4 January 2021**.

We have had a very busy and challenging autumn term and I wish to thank you for your continued support and words of encouragement as we continue to operate in a changed environment that has become our way of living with COVID-19. I also want to thank all of our pupils who have adjusted to a changed world with such care and consideration for each other; the challenge has been great but all members of staff are proud of our pupils working together, in developing their resilience in reengaging with learning to achieve their ambitions.

I wish to share some of the headline figures with you later in this letter.

### Adverse Weather Procedures

It is once again the time of year when we enter a period of what is likely to be unsettled and adverse weather. It may well be the case that an occurrence of adverse weather leads to an early morning decision whether to close the school. Any decision a school takes to remain open or to close is not always going to be well received. Critical factors include safety, road conditions and the availability of public transport; we remain in direct contact with transport services and are informed when services are cancelled or disrupted. There is an added pressure this year when considering changes many of you will have made in providing transport, so your child is able to start school according to the staggered start system we have in school. Any change to the start of the school day due to adverse weather will not be able to consider staggered start times. For example, if we must delay the start of the school day until 10.00am we will direct pupils to their Form Classroom as they arrive in school which is within their designated Year Group Zone.

The responsibility for school closure rests with the Local Authority (LA) for maintained schools such as TSS. However, because of the variation in geography and climate throughout the district, it is normal for the Headteacher to make an individual school closure decision. This decision will be based on a health and safety assessment (both for members of staff and pupils); the LA and the Headteacher will keep the school open if at all possible. Only in exceptional circumstances will the school be closed. If weather conditions are such that the school decides to close before the normal school day starts, then instruction will be given to publish notification between 7.15am and 7.30am in the following ways:

- Notification of closure through ParentMail
- An update on our school website - [www.titussaltschool.co.uk](http://www.titussaltschool.co.uk)
- An update via Twitter - @TitusSaltSchool
- An update on the Bradford Schools Online website – <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Schools/Home.aspx>
- A school closure message on Radio Leeds

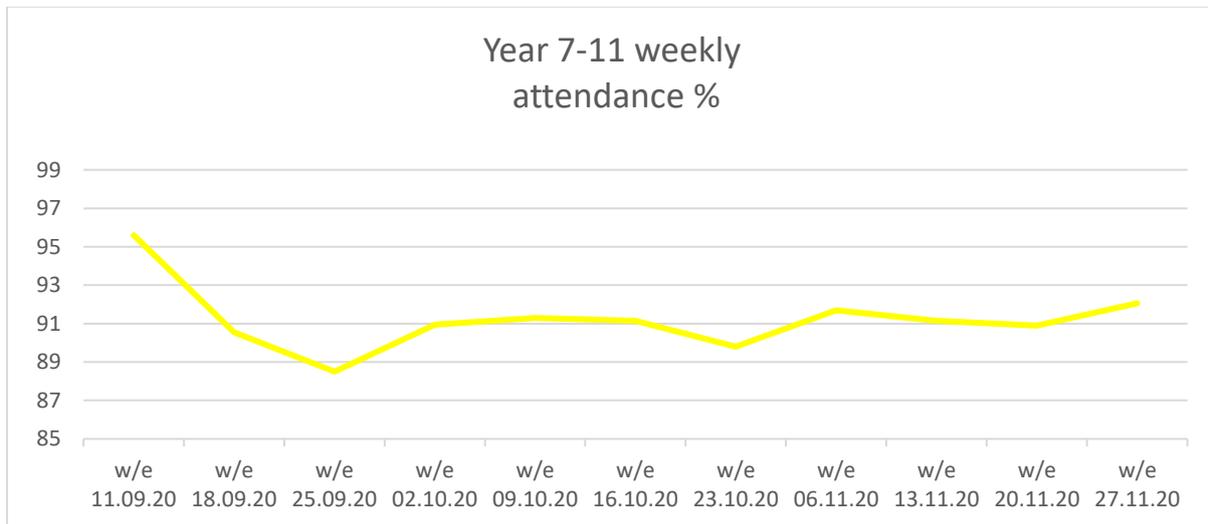
If weather conditions are such that a decision to close is taken during normal school hours, then all parents/carers who have provided us with mobile telephone contact details will be informed by text. In the past, we have allowed older pupils to make their way home immediately but required other pupils to provide confirmation from parents/carers of transport arrangements. This is usually done by telephone. Some staff will remain in school to supervise pupils until they are able to get home. As you can appreciate, we attempt to ensure we can deal effectively with weather conditions and circumstances arising from this that are beyond our control and I trust you feel reassured that we will do all we can. As a final plea, please do not contact the school switchboard in such situations as we will need this facility to continue critical school business.

## Attendance

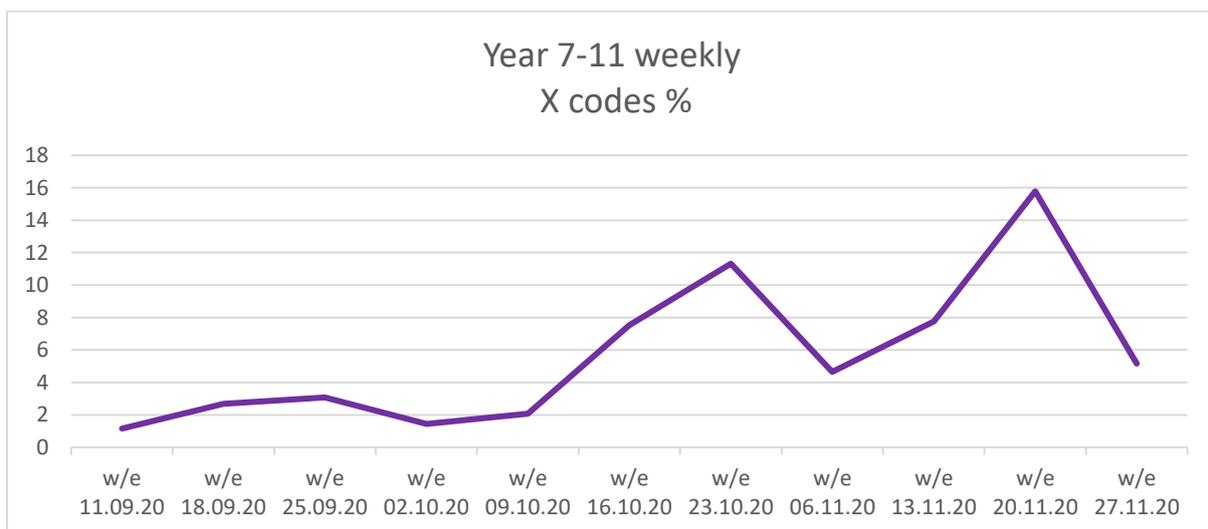
The impact of COVID-19 has been far-ranging but one measure of success for a school is in the attendance of pupils. Over the course of this term to date we have had an average attendance of 91% which is significantly above the national average for secondary schools; the attendance for all state schools, published by Gov.uk for last week is 83.5%.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

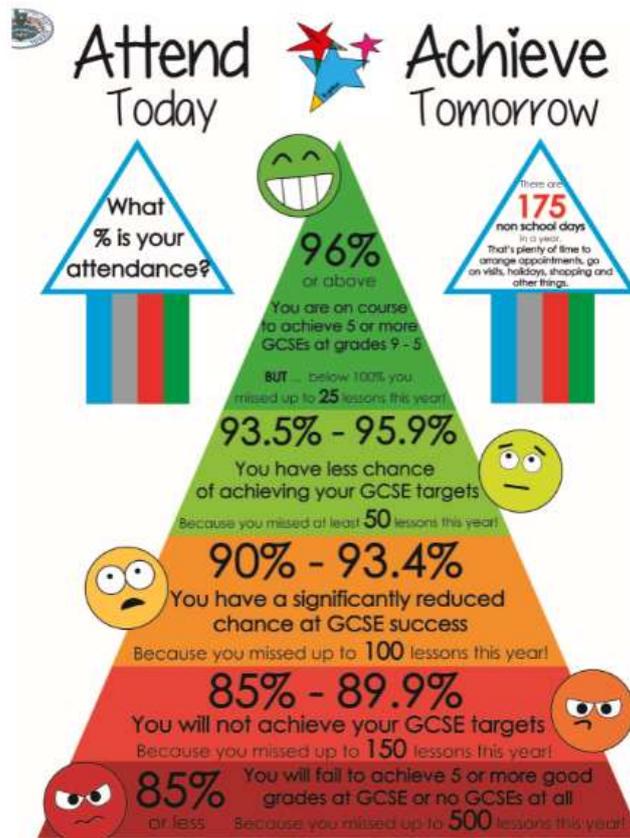
The following chart shows the fluctuation over the course of the term. It is interesting to note that some of the dips in attendance coincide with events that occurred nationally, and statements made by the Government in response to their managing of COVID-19:



What is not factored into these figures are the forced absence of pupils who have been notified to self-isolate in response to someone with symptoms or a positive test for COVID-19. For these pupils their attendance is authorised using X code, which is national policy, but they are not recorded as present in the figures above. If we include those pupils who would have been in school were it not for self-isolation, then our figure would be even higher. The following chart shows the fluctuation of percentage of pupils required to not be in school and notified to self-isolate:



In line with DfE guidance, TSS does not authorise holidays during term time. If 'Leave of Absence' is requested for exceptional circumstances, please write to the Attendance Officer giving full reasons for the absence and dates. The school will contact parents/carers directly to arrange a home visit or meeting in school. Attendance is a key area of focus for our school and any increase in the number of family holidays being taken during term time will adversely affect our ability to meet our target. Below is a copy of the message we give to pupils based on national statistics:



### Energy drinks

The Government have produced a paper on the consideration to ban the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16 and indeed many supermarkets already refuse the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/788862/govt-response-to-science-and-technology-committee-energy-drinks-report-web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788862/govt-response-to-science-and-technology-committee-energy-drinks-report-web.pdf)

We are aware that the consumption of high caffeine and sugar content energy drinks can adversely affect the mood and behaviour of children as well as have impact on physical as well as mental wellbeing. Therefore, we are not allowing energy drinks to be brought into school and consumed on school site. Any pupil who is seen with an energy drink, whether the container has been opened or not, will be asked to hand it to a member of staff who will leave it with a member of the Year Team for collection at the end of the day. I trust parents/carers will understand, we are taking this action to support the health and wellbeing of our children. I wish to thank you for your support with this.

### COVID-19

At a recent Headteachers' Briefing by the office of the Director of Children's Services, Bradford LA, a set of statistics were presented regarding the average cases of COVID-19:

	Average number of weekly positive tests for COVID-19 of pupils	Average number of weekly positive tests for COVID-19 of members of staff
<b>For a school of 1,000 pupils</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Titus Salt School Average</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Less than 1</b>

The figure for TSS is well below the average for Bradford and more so when the additional size of school is factored into the analysis i.e., we should expect an average of nine pupils per week and three members of staff all testing positive for COVID-19.

### **Not Entering Employment or Training (NEET)**

Another key piece of information that is a positive reflection of what we have achieved during these challenging times is our NEET figures for Years 11 and 13:

- NEET 0.4% Year 11
- NEET 0% Year 13

The NEET figure is significant in the context of COVID-19, anxiety felt by individuals and communities and national employment levels – my thanks to Helen Mountain, Careers Officer and Richard Foster, Deputy Head teacher and the teams they work with for such a fantastic job in supporting our pupils in achieving their next steps.

### **Progress Exams**

This is a very anxious time for all our pupils but especially for pupils and students in years 11 and 13 as they have recently sat progress exams and our Year 11 are completing full GCSE paper practice in examination conditions for English and Mathematics. Their focus has been admirable and their behaviour a credit to them and their year team. I want to reassure parents, carers and our pupils and students that the outcomes from the Progress Exams will be to help us identify any gaps in learning and not used to determine what an outcome should be in summer 2021. I have asked that all Faculty Leaders work with Subject Leaders and all their members of staff to ensure that outcomes are in line with the expected Performance Indicator for pupils.

We are expecting a statement from the Department for Education regarding examinations in summer 2021, it was due at the end of November 2020. You will be aware that Scotland and Wales have cancelled the sitting of Key Stage 4 examinations and replaced them with a series of tests and assessments. The Government in England has been consulting with a range of bodies and Councils as they prepare to make a statement on different options for exam papers next year with the expectation that examinations will take place in full albeit delayed by three weeks. Consideration is being given to providing more optional sections on exam papers and providing schools with topics to be covered by exams, but this is all speculation until the statement is made; which we hope will be soon.

I have been asked by the Local Authority to be part of a small team of Headteachers to meet with a representative of the Children's Commissioner's Office to give feedback on either the proposal if it is known at that time, or our views on examinations for summer 2021. I will write again once I have more information and clarity regarding examinations.

### **Reflections on the autumn term:**

Once again we have had a very full, eventful and successful first term of the academic year and this end of term letter cannot do justice in conveying the commitment and hard work of pupils, parents and of course, all members of staff. I am immensely proud of our pupils and the following is only a part of the range and variety of our school life:

## **News and Events – September 2020 – November 2020**

### **Influential women in Engineering**

Congratulations to Year 8 pupils, Katie, Alice, and Caitlin, all three girls entered a STEM competition relating to 'Influential Women in Engineering' and have received 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize! Pupils were set a challenge to design a poster celebrating famous women in engineering. This was all organised virtually during lockdown and the girls showed self-motivation and came up with some amazing work. The winner received £150 amazon voucher and the two runners up received £100 vouchers. Well done.

### **National Poetry**

Year 7 pupils got very creative in a fun English session and wanted to share their brilliant work as part of our celebration of National Poetry Day. Each form collaboratively wrote an 'I Remember' poem filled with memories from their long summer break.

### **Stemettes Workshop**

Eighteen girls from our Year 9 STEM group took part in an inspirational STEM careers event delivered by a company called Stemettes. The Stemettes are an award-winning social enterprise that has worked with almost 45,000 young people across the UK and Europe, their objective is to show that girls do Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths too! They work with young women and girls aged 5 up to 25 and help them make informed decisions on pursuing all manner of STEM related careers.

### **Bradford Schools FA**

We are delighted to announce that Regan, Oliver, and Milo have all been selected to play for Bradford Schools FA, Regan for the U13's, Oliver and Milo for the U12's. This is a huge achievement representing the Bradford district and competing across Yorkshire.

### **Northern School of Contemporary Dance**

Congratulations Scarlett! Scarlett (Year 11) has been awarded a place on the Centre of Advanced Training Scheme with Northern School of Contemporary Dance. She underwent a rigorous audition process, up against hundreds, all competing for one of the 20 places. Well done!

### **Working for the community**

Gideon, Year 10, displayed his favourite fossils from the museum's archives, for Bracken Hall Countryside Centre's Open Day in November. Gideon is their newest and youngest volunteer.

### **Ex pupil, Harvey**

We were very proud to hear that Harvey's debut for the under 21's Leeds United team went well in September. We wish him every success in all his future appearances.

### **Emma, Year 12**

Congratulations to Sixth Form student Emma, who has been accepted onto the DiSE (Diploma in Sporting Excellence) program, with 29 of the best 16/17-year-old female rugby players in the country. Emma will complete this programme alongside her studies at Level 3.

On behalf of all TSS staff, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your support throughout what has been another successful term.

I wish you all a peaceful festive time and a very happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



**Ian Morrel**  
**Headteacher**