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11th October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

This letter is to inform you of the current situation in Gowerton School relating to the pandemic.

As the Covid case rate is high locally this has impacted adversely on staffing levels at our school as well as upon pupil absence rates. Most schools throughout the Local Authority are now in the position where the numbers of pupils testing positive for Covid has exceeded last academic year's total. This is also the case for school staff.

We are currently having to assess daily whether it is safe to run the school in the normal way. While we have implemented plans to reduce the impact of higher staff absence than normal, the effect of Covid is very considerable at the moment.

Swansea schools have agreed that we will not be able to run safely if:

- 20% or more of our teaching staff are absent at any one time, and/ or
- A large proportion of the staff who are critical to the safe running of the school are absent (e.g. site staff, fire marshalls, safeguarding staff)

In this event, we will inform you that this critical point has been reached and that it will be necessary to ask one or more year groups to remain at home. Work will be provided for pupils to complete during this period.

Please be aware that this is not a decision that will be taken lightly. All schools want to be able to run in circumstances as near to normality as possible. Every possible means of avoiding partial closure will be fully explored; however the availability of cover staff is a major issue as all schools are in the same position as our own.

Secondary schools throughout our Local Authority are sending a similar letter to this one. If and when we reach this point, you will receive further information on the dates, arrangements, etc., whether or not your child's year group is one of those affected.

As you will be aware, all of the above is under consideration because the current reality is that many pupils, many of their family members and many of the staff are currently affected by Covid. We wish each of them a swift and full return to good health, and I thank you for your continuing support in these challenging times.

Yours faithfully,

Mr N Jones
Headteacher

Headteacher - Mr. N. Jones M(Ed.) - **Prifathro**