



ORMISTON DENES ACADEMY

6th November 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

I have been involved in education for a number of decades and each year after half-term, it seems like we have never been away after just a few hours. Having said that it was great to drive into school first thing Monday morning.

You will know that face coverings (masks) are now compulsory so must be worn when using indoor communal areas and whilst moving around inside the school. This decision was a directive from Ormiston Academies Trust in light of the Government's announcement last weekend and it matches our school plan. We are being very strict in enforcing this as you would expect, not simply because it is what we have been told to do but because we want to do our bit to support the Lowestoft community. One thing I quickly learnt when I joined Ormiston Denes was that there is a strong community spirit in Lowestoft so this is one way in which we are aiming to contribute. As mentioned in our communication earlier this week, we realise that there will be a few exceptions to wearing masks – as there is nationally – so please contact your child's pastoral manager if you think it applies to them.

It feels like the government announcement has also increased the worry that some people have about Covid-19 and that is understandable, but I would also like to emphasise that we continue to be following our school routines telling students to wash their hands and use sanitiser so that we are doing all we can to make the school as safe as possible. With all that is going on, could we end up with a "Covid generation", a large group of students who have missed out long periods of school and have endured high levels of worry and concern? I believe that the main way to ensure that this does not happen is for you to send you child to school so that they can learn and also socialise with their friends. After all, they will only get one childhood. As adults I see one of our key roles is to reassure children and give them the skills to help keep themselves safe.

I have started my new question and answer sessions with different tutor groups this week and have loved every minute. There is no planning involved, I simply go along and after a quick introduction, am open for questions from the students. I have been really impressed by the questions that have been asked and how interested the students are in how the school is run and managed. For me it has two real benefits. Firstly I get to chat with our students which is always a highlight, and secondly I get to hear their views, both what is going well and their suggestions for improvement. As a principal, this insight is invaluable.

As most of you will know, we normally support Lowestoft Town Council at the civic remembrance event marking Armistice Day, with students reading poetry and laying our academy wreath as part of the service. Unfortunately, the normal service cannot be held this year, but the Town Council are marking the event with an online video, and we are proud that some of our students have recorded readings as part of this. Further details will be on the Lowestoft Town Council social media pages. Again, because of the current situation we are not allowed to sell the



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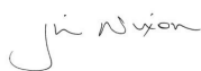
normal poppies in school so we are inviting students to create their own poppies. There are templates available in school, and also on the Royal British Legion website, where you are also able to make a donation.

We will be marking Armistice Day on Wednesday 11th November with our own commemorative event, which will allow every student in the academy to watch our short service and show respect for those that suffered, sacrificed and lost their lives in times of war, but also for the thousands that have lost lives during the pandemic. Further information on both the town event and our own service, will be detailed on our social media pages.

With Children in Need coming up next Friday (13th November), we are pleased that students are keen to get involved in raising money for charity. The attached letter provides full details of what the students have asked for, and how we will be able to work this in a safe and appropriate manner. The theme for this year is 'Come as Yourself' which allows students to wear clothes of their choice. **However all outfits must be school appropriate and blazers are be worn over their casual clothes.**

I hope you all have a nice weekend and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Nixon".

Jim Nixon
Principal