

25th June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

You will be aware that your child's school is member of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). I am writing to update you on ODST's response following the latest government announcement regarding the extension of the final phase of lockdown. In order to ensure the safety of all our pupils and staff, as well as visitors to our sites such as parents, we have asked our headteachers to re-assess carefully the risks of many proposed summer events such as sports days and school plays. We have asked them to work within certain key safety parameters. I am writing to let you know what the likely impact of this will be for your children's events.

Sports Days

We have encouraged our schools to hold outdoor sports days for pupils, providing that the local circumstances indicate this to be low risk, and additional measures are put in place, such as thorough cleaning of equipment between groups of children using it. We have, however, asked our schools to ensure that there are no more than 30 spectators/visitors at any single event, and to ensure that Covid-safe toilet facilities and appropriate first aid and social distancing can be achieved within the 30. For some schools, this might mean that not all parents who want to attend can do so, or indeed that it is not possible to have spectators at all.

Whilst I am delighted that this means that very many of our pupils can participate in such a valuable and enjoyable event, I am sorry that for many of you, the limit of spectators may be disappointing news. I know how lovely it is to cheer your child on as they compete in an event, and this may not therefore be possible this year.

Performances

There are significant educational and social benefits to pupils who can participate in musicals, plays or other performance opportunities at school. So, if schools can assess that the risk to continuing with such events is low, and additional measures can be put in place to ensure the safety of all, such events can still go ahead. There are significant restrictions on singing and musical performance of wind and brass instruments. If the performance is outdoors, then a maximum audience of 30 is possible, again given the need for safe toilet facilities and social distancing. If the performance is indoors, unfortunately we will not be able to have spectators this year. Schools are encouraged in this case to record performances and upload them to a secure site where parents can view.

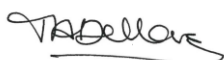
Other Measures

Parents, carers and other visitors to our school sites are required to wear a face-covering unless medically exempt. This should fully cover the wearer's nose and mouth. Contact tracing is required for any events at which parents stay for 15 minutes or more. Schools have been asked to ensure that, in this circumstance, you log into the contact tracing app for your school using a remote device or record your name and contact details on paper. Thank you so much for your co-operation on this.

We were all hoping for a return to near normality for the last few weeks of term, but I hope you understand why we have asked your school's headteacher and local governing body to work within our guidelines. We believe that this is the safest option for all our families. We are wholly committed to offering the best possible education to all our pupils and there remains a real risk of school closure following a Covid-19 outbreak. We hope that by adhering to the measures outlined above, we can minimise the chances of this happening at your child's school.

We are working hard to ensure that all our ODST children can thrive at school despite these challenges and make strong progress through being offered a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities to help them enjoy school, their friendships, their learning and any sunshine that the British weather offers!

Yours sincerely



Anne Dellar
ODST Chief Executive Officer