



Dear Parents and Carers,

On Friday last week, 20<sup>th</sup> January, I took the decision to close school early. I can assure you that this decision was not taken lightly and a series of events led me to make this decision. We had a number of students that went into crisis at the same time and found it very difficult to manage their emotions and actions. This, coupled with a shortage of staff, meant we were not able to keep school open safely. Whilst this event was highly unusual, I cannot categorically say it will not happen again. I can, however, give my reassurance that all our staff work tirelessly to ensure a school closure (full or partial) is a last resort. I would like to thank you for your support – I appreciate how disruptive a change to routine can be for our students, as well as to your own schedules.

You will be aware that the Government have updated their guidance with regards to the wearing of masks in educational settings from 20<sup>th</sup> January as well as in public places from 26<sup>th</sup> January. Students and staff are no longer required to wear masks in school, but if they chose to do so then this choice will be fully supported. Our school continues to be cleaned to a high standard daily and is very well ventilated with windows being kept open. May I remind you that, where possible, learning activities will continue to take place outside so sending in extra items of clothing for your child will enable us to layer them up and keep them warm.

In addition, to ensure safety of the entirety of our school community, I am asking all staff and students to be vigilant in taking the widest view possible of Omicron Covid symptoms. If your child – or a member of staff - presents with any symptoms, we ask for them to stay at home until there is more certainty this symptomatic presentation is not related to Covid. Should these symptoms present for longer than 24 hours I would strongly encourage undertaking a PCR test. All staff are continuing to undertake daily Lateral Flow testing.

### **School life**

We have been putting an emphasis on reading scheme work and spelling this term in English, and will be beginning a new fiction book for literacy and comprehension next week. In our maths sessions we have continued working on number, consolidating number bond skills and looking at different methods of addition including the part-whole and bar method. We have begun looking at capacity and measuring in litres and millilitres which has involved a good number of practical activities.

Our topic this term is science based and involves light and shadow. We have been learning about how light travels, reflects and refracts on different surfaces, how shadows are created and how they can change, and how light reacts with different materials. Lots of interesting and fun investigations with torches, materials and dark rooms!

### **Staff news**

We are delighted that Brandon has joined us as a Learning Mentor. He comes to Kite Ridge with experience of working in another Special School within Buckinghamshire. He has already formed strong bonds with many of our students and is keen to expand his knowledge to enable him to work with all students at a more in depth level.

Sadly we have said goodbye to Jack this week. Jack has been a Learning Mentor here for three years and has helped our students to develop and achieve in many areas. We wish Jack the best of luck in his future endeavours.

We still have vacancies for Learning Mentors and continue to advertise the roles through a number of media. We are hopeful that, now the Christmas break is over, we will be able to secure some new members in our very special team at Kite Ridge.

As always, please do feel free to get in touch at any time to discuss any concerns or feedback you may have.

Best wishes,

*Steven Sneesby*

Headteacher