



21<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents/Carer

## Attendance and Uniform Update for the Start of Term

As you will be aware, the government has clearly stated that all students should return to school in September. Therefore, we expect all students to be in school at the start of term and we are very much looking forward to welcoming them back to Chew Valley School. We have been preparing for their arrival and you will have seen the detail of this from the letter that was sent out earlier this week from Mr Beynon. I am writing to you today around the two key areas of attendance and uniform.

We have been instructed to apply our **normal attendance policy** and therefore we politely ask that you familiarise yourself with the process to avoid any unauthorised absence. We do however appreciate that we are in unprecedented times and therefore there may be circumstances within each of your individual homes which mean you may become unsure about whether or not your child should be attending school. If this is the case, we hope the grid at the end of the letter is useful as a reference point to know “what to do if...”

This guidance has been put together from the following government advice;

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

We should all be aware that this guidance is relevant at the time of writing but could be subject to change, therefore do check the links for latest guidance.

The following is a link to our school attendance policy for information;

<https://www.lsp.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=21&type=pdf>

As you may have seen there is an updated document on the website regarding uniform guidance. This can be found at <https://www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk/Schooluniform/>. Rest assured, we have made no changes to the main uniform itself and the guidance issued last year still applies. The update simply contains some small changes about where you can purchase uniform.

However, we felt it was appropriate to write to you at this time with a little more detail. We understand that many of you may have “held off” buying new items of uniform until now and therefore I hope to provide some clarity over certain issues that seem to be the “grey areas” with regards to teenagers and school uniform. It is perfectly normal for young people to push the boundaries with regards to this. Below, in writing, we aim to summarise the school’s position on these issues as we know that in the past these have caused some parents and students angst.

We also feel it is appropriate to recognise that due to COVID-19 there are some new issues that might arise from being asked to wear the PE kit during the school day and some people would like clarity on whether students can wear masks. Again, I hope to cover this in the following detail.

### I. Jewellery, Piercings and Nail Polish

As part of their curriculum, students at Chew Valley School work in a variety of different environments throughout the school day which can include workshops, laboratories, food preparation areas,

art/music/drama/dance studios as well as sports facilities. It is therefore essential for health and safety reasons that students do not wear more jewellery than is stipulated in the guidance i.e. a maximum of one stud or sleeper in each ear and no nail varnish (please note that this is in line with the guidance for almost all other schools).

We therefore politely ask (to avoid disappointment) that any piercings or nail polish that cannot be removed instantly e.g. shellac/gel nails are not purchased/applied. We appreciate that some teenagers want these things and therefore if you do intend to give these items as presents, we always ask that this is done at the beginning of a long holiday so there is plenty of time for it not to be an issue when back in school. Please know that even if the items were purchased as a present, students will be expected to remove them for the reasons mentioned above and we would expect parental support with this.

## **2. Tight Trousers/Short Skirts**

This is a tricky issue because the fashion is for tight trousers. Our guidance states that no “tight fit” styles should be worn and therefore we would ask that there is room around the leg and ankle i.e. you could fit your finger between the material and skin (we will obviously not be doing this but this should act as guidance). Only tailored school trousers should be purchased as per our guidance.

With regard to skirts, we ask that these are not of a “tight fit” and are knee length. With this guidance, we again appreciate the fashion for skirts and what you may be sold in the “school section” is for the skirt to sit “just above the knee”. This is reasonable but we would ask for a common sense approach with this. Students are in a working environment throughout the day, the priority should not be fashion but practical clothing appropriate for the tasks in hand. Therefore, if your child’s tutor or Head of House suggests the skirt is too short, or the trousers are too tight, this is done so with knowledge of how they are wearing the item throughout the day and what is deemed appropriate in a school environment for a child of their age.

## **3. Hoodies**

Some students like to wear hooded tops/fashion jackets either as a replacement to their school jumper or as a fashion accessory. As hooded tops are not part of the school uniform, they should not be worn as a replacement to the school jumper. Hoodies also do not fit into what we consider a suitable outdoor coat and we would politely ask that they are not worn in school. If a child is wearing such an item, staff will ask students to put it in their bag and in the future, leave the item at home.

If a student persists in wearing this item, we will quite reasonably ask them to hand it over so that it can be stored and collected at the end of the school day. Therefore, please ensure your child comes to school with their school jumper and a suitable outdoor (waterproof) coat so that they are able to feel comfortable in all weather conditions.

## **4. Jumpers**

The school uniform is a shirt, tie and V-necked jumper. We deliberately chose this combination so that students would not go for different variations of how to wear the ties or shirts - in/out etc. This is to reduce peer pressure to wear the uniform in a particular style so that students can focus on learning rather than worrying over such issues. We therefore expect students to wear all three items. Please support this by making sure your child brings their jumper to school.

Please be assured that if it is hot inside a classroom and a student requests to take their jumper off, they will be allowed to do so but they will also be asked to put it back on at the end of a lesson before leaving the room. However, if it is hot outside, we will, of course say it is absolutely fine to not wear jumpers for that day or until there is a break in the weather but we will ask them to tuck their shirt in.

## 5. Shoes/Trainers

You will note that in the uniform brochure on page 6 and 7 we look to tackle the “grey area” of shoes versus black trainers.

Our expectation is that shoes are smart and offer protection against bad weather and falls. They also conform to health and safety standards for school use. We have stipulated that logos are not allowed as this puts pressure on other students to purchase expensive footwear.

However, Clarks and other leading brands have school shoes which could be classed as trainers (and contain logos) e.g.



In a bid to work with our parents/carers who may have been used to purchasing these or similar shoes at primary school, we feel an acceptance of this type of footwear is necessary. Obviously, some of the sports brands have moved into this area and we try to be clear with students and parents/carers that footwear needs to match the criteria above i.e. footwear should be all black, smart and offer protection and conform to health and safety standards. Some black, leather trainers meet these standards and are, in some circumstances a lot smarter and offer more protection than some of the shoes we see, as the photos following show:



The latter example in the three given above is the most controversial because of the logo but the three Adidas stripes are clearly visible on the first example so we have said yes to this shoe (minus the silver tag) because it does fall into our criteria.

We appreciate that for some, footwear is the trickiest area you have to deal with as shoes/trainers are expensive and children will try to convince you that the shoes they want definitely match the criteria! Therefore, if you are in any doubt, go with the simple rule our Heads of House will enforce - if the shoe is a material other than leather (or leather equivalent), has any colour except black on it and/or it contains a visible air bubble, it does not meet the criteria. If you want further clarity, send an image of the shoe to myself or your child's respective Head of House via [enquiries@chewvalleyschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@chewvalleyschool.co.uk) prior to purchasing and we will give you a clear “yes/no” answer.

## 6. PE Kit During Term 1 2020

In Mr Beynon's recent letter, you will have read that full school uniform should be worn to school from September apart from the days when PE is taking place and then PE kit should be worn. We appreciate that as we move into the autumn months, the weather may change and also from a modesty point of view, students would feel more comfortable if they can cover their legs. We have therefore made the decision **for this period of time** that it is entirely appropriate for students to wear black tracksuit bottoms over their shorts or a black pair of appropriate leggings/base layer under their shorts.

During known wet weather conditions, students will not be outside for their PE lessons. However, if they are caught in a shower, tracksuit bottoms may be a more practical option rather than leggings/base layer as they can quickly put on dry clothing and be more comfortable.

## **7. Face Masks**

The local authorities have instructed us that students are to wear face masks when on the buses, in line with the government directive on public transport. We would expect students to comply and carry out the instructions of the bus operators in a polite and respectful manner. However, following government guidance, when they arrive **in school, they are not required to wear a mask.**

We will therefore be asking students to remove their mask when they disembark the bus in the morning. For hygiene reasons they will be asked to place their mask in a sealed bag (which we politely ask you to provide e.g. plastic food bag).

Having said this, if your child wishes to wear a mask in school during the school day, we will of course be accommodating. Therefore, if this is your/their preference, we ask that your child is provided with two masks for the school day so that they can replace the mask they have worn on the bus with a new mask for their time in school. We then ask that both masks are cleaned/replaced at home prior to their return the next day.

If you have any questions around attendance, do please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hannah Kenyon', written in a cursive style.

Hannah Kenyon  
Assistant Headteacher, Students and Inclusion

What to do if....	Action needed	Return to school when....
...my child has coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school using the insight portal or student absence line 01275 332272 (select option 1)</li> <li>• Self-isolate</li> <li>• Get a test</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about the test result</li> </ul>	...the test comes back negative
...my child tests positive for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school using the Insight portal or student absence line 01275 332272 (select option 1)</li> <li>• Keep self-isolating for at least 10 days from when the symptoms started</li> <li>• Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must self-isolate for 14 days from when your child starts self-isolating</li> <li>• Household members to get a test</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about the test result</li> </ul>	...they feel better. They can return to school after 14 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell/taste as these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.
...somebody in our household has tested positive for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school using the Insight portal or student absence line 01275 332272 (select option 1)</li> <li>• Self-isolate for 14 days</li> </ul>	...the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation
...NHS test and trace have identified my child as a “close contact” of somebody with coronavirus symptoms or confirmed coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school using the Insight portal or student absence line 01275 332272 (select option 1)</li> <li>• Self-isolate for 14 days</li> </ul>	...the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation
...We/my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take unauthorised leave during term time</li> <li>• Consider quarantine requirements and the government foreign travel advice when booking travel</li> <li>• Provide information to school as per the attendance policy</li> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school using the Insight portal or student absence line 01275 332272 (select option 1)</li> <li>• Self-isolate for 14 days</li> </ul>	the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation
...we have received medical advice that my child must resume shielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not come to school</li> <li>• Contact school via <a href="mailto:enquiries@chewvalleyschool.co.uk">enquiries@chewvalleyschool.co.uk</a> and the relevant member of the Student Services team will call and speak to you about your child's needs</li> <li>• Shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding has paused again</li> </ul>	...the health service inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again.