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11 June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers.

We have just received the following information from Penn Sports who supply our logoed uniform.

Dear All

As per previous emails, can I confirm that we have made the decision to continue online only for the foreseeable future.

I have had conversations with a number of schools explaining our decision which has been understood and backed, but I thought I would just take the time to explain and ask that you notify all parents/carers (preferably from now until the end of term) in case they are unaware.

Reasons

We have 2 members of staff that have been immunised but are classed as high risk

We have a number of younger staff that have not been immunised at all

We would be restricted on the number of people allowed in the shop at one time, which for back to school trade would be unworkable due to the number of staff we require

Families often visit in 3's, 4's or even 5's and can take quite a while to get the kids kitted out, so the time taken by families would lead to queues outside from Benfleet to Southend!

We could potentially be a super spreader purely due to the footfall we get during back to school

Changing rooms need to be sanitised after each use and ideally ventilated too, which would mean a member of staff would be tied up doing that. We have invested a considerable amount of money in a new back-office system and website which is more user friendly with regards to size guides etc, which makes the selection easier.

We are better equipped now for the online purchasing to cover us for future outbreaks of mutant covid strains. We send out automated SMS messages when orders are ready to collect, to avoid people chasing orders when they're notifications have been emailed and gone into spam. You may have seen articles in the media of schoolwear shops that have had 4 hour queues, fights in the queues, security needed to manage the queues and similar unacceptable situations and we really don't want to go down that road.

I am very pleased to say that many parents have already purchased their uniform, but we need your support to encourage more to do so.

We have relaxed the exchange policy, so if items are kept clean, fresh and with tags on, if purchased now, they can be exchanged all the way up to when they go back to school.

A particular priority are new starters, so we don't get a situation where they don't have any uniform.

Finally, I must also draw your attention to potential stock shortages due to the world wide shipping issue. Some of you may be aware that air freight costs have gone through the roof, meaning more companies are using shipping resulting in an increase in price for that method, a shortage of containers and delays too. It's being experienced throughout many industries and not just schoolwear.

The result of this, is that we are already being notified of delays to stock that was forward ordered at Christmas 2020. This is not a major issue at this time, but if orders that are due for August are also delayed, then we will have an issue.

So once again please ask the parents/carers to place their orders as soon as possible to get in the queue for stock arriving

If you need to discuss any of the above further, please give me a call on 01268 751724

Kind Regards

Mark Penn

Director