



16<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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Dear Parents/Carers

It has been a busy but productive start to the term! The students seem to have settled in and are engaging well with their learning and school life.

### Communications

I am acutely aware that we have been issuing a large number of communications. The start of term is always busy for us but combined with playing catch-up following Covid, I know we are asking more of you than normal. Over the next few weeks, we will settle back into a more normal pattern and reduce our impact on your inbox. Thank you for your patience and for keeping up with requests.

### Corona Virus

Since the start of term, we have had 29 Covid cases reported to us, 7 of which were picked up at the start of term testing. Many of these pre-dated the start of term and were in isolation when school began. This week we have seen a fall in the number of cases reported. The guidance around this has changed, whilst I am still required to report cases to you, I will do so periodically and if you wish to review the latest letter and guidance it can be found [here](#).

We now have further details on what would be considered an outbreak, in its most simple form, it may be considered an outbreak if there were five connected cases in a year group in a 10-day period. At present we are not close to this number but in the event that numbers begin to rise our outbreak plan will be put in place and details can be found [here](#).

We continue to urge students to complete the twice-weekly home testing as this is the main line of defence to keep the virus from spreading within school. Additional kits will be issued next week.

You may have seen news regarding the vaccination of children aged between 12 and 15. The NHS-commissioned School Age Immunisation Service leads on the delivery of the vaccinations and we will work with them to provide space, a schedule for implementation and delivery of communications. We will share further information as we receive it.

### Homework

For those parents in Year 8 and above, you may be used to receiving details of homework via the SIMS app and Google Classroom. This is a duplication of the task for staff and therefore, we are going to stop using the SIMS app to record homework and trial the "guardians" feature in Google Classroom. This will simplify the recording of work for both students and staff. The guardians feature does not allow you to access Google Classroom directly but allows you to receive a regular email detailing your child's upcoming assignments. We have trialled this successfully in the sixth form, and now we would like to try it with the whole school. Further details will be issued in the next week or so.

The SIMS app will continue to be useful for attendance information, timetables and data collection. Year 7 parents will be invited to access the app shortly.

### **Lockers**

With the huge volume of site works taking place over the summer, we were not able to complete the set-up of a locker system – we have over 700 new lockers in place. I am aware that this is an inconvenience to students carrying bags and resources. Again, details will follow shortly about how to access this provision.

### **Cars on site**

Thank you so much for keeping cars away from the school site at the beginning and end of the day. In particular please do not attempt to pick up from the car park until after 3.40pm to allow students to safely leave the site. Work on the new fences and gates will begin in the next two weeks at which point car entrances will remain closed during the school day with access to permit holders only.

### **Open Evening**

This year our Open Evening will take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> September. To help us manage the volume of visitors we are asking that this is restricted to Year 6 parents only. I know many current Year 7 parents have not had a chance to visit the site, we will therefore make the Year 7 Meet the Tutor evening an in-person event and your son/daughter will be most welcome to show you around the new build and playground space as you attend your appointment. For parents in other year groups, you are very welcome to sign up for the next painting and gardening event (date TBC) and we will be happy to show you round the site while the school is not in operation.

To support the preparations for Open Evening, **school will close at 1.10pm on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September.** Students should then arrive at school and go straight to their period 2 lesson on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October (10.25am for Year 7 and 8, and 10.10am for all other years). My thanks to those students who volunteer to support departments or lead tours.

### **Sponsored Walk**

Tomorrow marks the return of our annual sponsored walk. This is an opportunity for all the students in the school to participate in a whole school event, support their physical well being and enjoy the beautiful local environment. It is of course non-uniform (sensible footwear please) and students only need to bring books and equipment for their period 1 and 2 lessons.

Students have been reminded to make sure they stay on the route, register at the mid-point and sign out in the main hall upon their return, they are permitted to go home on completion of the walk. There is a tuck shop on the route so students may need a small amount of change and must keep any litter with them.

The event is our biggest fundraiser of the year, my thanks for your kindness with donations and seeking sponsorship from family and friends – it makes a huge difference to the school particularly as we were unable to hold the event last year. My thanks also go to all those volunteers and staff involved in the organisation.

Many thanks for your continued support during an exceptionally busy and complicated start to term.

Yours sincerely

**Mr S Matthews**  
**Headteacher**