

10 March 2021

Dear Parents

A final note before the return to school on Thursday.

Return to school

Just a reminder that Thursday is a normal school day and we expect buses to be running as per the normal schedules. It is week 1 on the student timetables and students should ensure that they come fully prepared for all lessons.

I appreciate that the pandemic has led to a change in circumstance for many families, please do not hesitate to contact the school if there are financial pressures which we may be able to assist with. Many students will be putting on uniform for the first time in three months and we have an 11-16 bursary to help with uniform costs. Information regarding financial assistance procedures can be found under the Pupil Premium section of the website.

Masks will need to be worn in corridors (as before) and until Easter in classrooms where social distancing is not possible. Exemption badges are available from pastoral and just require an email from a parent or carer to confirm exemption. A mask or badge is a temporary addition to the uniform policy and one I hope to remove at the earliest opportunity.

Testing

We have completed two days of testing and over 1000 students have received their first test. In a previous communication, I stated that I had hoped to hand out the home test kits at the time of the first test, unfortunately they only started to arrive on Tuesday, and we are still expecting additional supplies. Therefore, we will give students the home kits at the time of the third test, these contain seven tests which should cover a period of 3 ½ weeks. I expect to receive more supplies before Easter to extend the home testing programme.

Changes to school calendar

Just a reminder that the Year 9 parents' evening will go ahead as scheduled via SchoolCloud on **Thursday 18 March** and therefore there will be an early finish at 1.15pm to allow appointments to commence at 2pm.

We shall not be collecting assessment data this term for Years 7-10 and Year 12 and therefore there will be no reports for Easter and no academic tracking event. Therefore, **Thursday 1 April**, the last day before the Easter holiday, is now a normal school day and not an academic tracking day.

Year 9 Options

On **Thursday 11 March**, we shall launch the Year 9 options section on the school website; it will be a dedicated portal in which students can watch videos produced by the subject leaders describing the content and requirements of all of the Key Stage 4 option subjects. In addition, Year 9 students will be handed an options booklet in school tomorrow.

We are delighted that students are returning to school and, speaking to many of the students over the last few days, I believe they are looking forward to a return to some normality. I cannot promise that some students will not have to self-isolate at some point, with the increase in testing it is likely that more cases are detected, but I can promise you we will endeavour to minimise the disruption to the students' learning. I hope large scale closures are behind us for good now. I know there is significant coverage in the press regarding lost generations and catch up, but I genuinely believe that in regard to academic progress, students will very quickly recover lost ground and not be disadvantaged in the future. We cannot recover all of the lost opportunities to engage in socialisation, performances and clubs but we will resume them as soon as we are permitted to do so.

Best wishes



David Collins
Headteacher