

Dear Parents / Carers

The return to school has gone well and I **thank you** for the part you have played in this. It has been so good having pupils back, and they have slipped back into the slightly adjusted routine really well. I have to say a particular well done to our **Year 7 pupils**, who have had to start with us without the reassurance of the usual induction process; they have done so well and deserve great credit.

Can I ask for your help please.

Each day we have pupils coming into school without their **face mask**. Although of course for many this is simply a 'one off', having lost it or simply forgotten to put it into their pocket as they leave home, there seems to be a small number of repeat offenders. Please can you make sure you send your children to school fully equipped for the day, with everything they need, which at this time means with a face covering. It is also being reported that some pupils, often the older ones, are removing their **face coverings whilst on the buses**. This is completely unacceptable, and could result in transport being removed, so please can you make sure your child is not doing this.

Can I also give you notice that we intend to return to the usual, **full uniform** soon. This will be by half term at the very latest, but may be sooner. If you have not done so already, please make sure you have bought the blazer or Year 11 jumper in preparation. We still ask you to do the best you can in sending your children into school with as much freshly laundered clothing as possible, but we also accept this is 'please do the best you can with the clothes you have' situation. It is also, realistically, not possible for us to monitor this, so we really are asking for your commitment to doing this as best you can, thanks.

Social distancing in school is difficult; no matter how effective the one way system, dedicated year group areas and slightly staggered movement times are, we do have pupils close to each other at times. However, it is fair to say I have been surprised by what appears to be an almost complete lack of pupil motivation to socially distance themselves. We now intend to reiterate the importance of this in slightly more instructional tones than previously, and expect to see a better attempt by the pupils. We usually operate in an encouraging cooperation style rather than an enforcement and punishment approach, and do want this to continue. Please talk to your children about the importance of distancing.

The need for a **good coat is never appreciated by the young** I feel, but hopefully the coming winter will be a good learning experience for them! Please be reminded that as part of our risk assessment we intend to keep pupils outside as much as possible. Plans will be in place should we need to come inside during particularly cold or wet weather, but we really want to do that if really necessary. Please, as the weather will deteriorate soon, make sure you send your children to school ready for plenty of fresh air in a good waterproof coat, and maybe even a 'brolly'! Also, although I know many pupils like to eat their lunch outside all year round, once the weather is colder we will make arrangements for there to be indoor eating rooms, so no one has to eat standing up if they choose not to.

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College dress code

Unlike some sixth forms we do not ask college students to wear a suit or a formal uniform. The college dress code is a relaxed version of the staff dress code, and as senior members of the school community college students act as role models to younger pupils. Please can I ask parents to reinforce this message and remind their children that wearing skirts that are too high above the knee, or tops which show midriff, are not acceptable and should not be worn.

Reports and Parents' Evenings

Be aware that we are planning to stick to the published dates for reports and parents' evenings if possible. It might be that these take a different form to normal, but we will keep you posted. For example, it would be incredibly difficult to report an accurate predicted grade for those at GCSE level until we have worked through most of the term, so we may well not report it until then. We are also considering the very best time to do any Mock exam.

Organising our curriculum delivery

Be aware that I have asked departments to consider carefully the order of the curriculum content they are delivering, in case we find ourselves in another closure situation. For exam groups in particular, we are trying to deliver key content now where possible, so that the difficult and important concepts are learnt face to face. Of course we hope we will not need to close, but it would be remiss of us not to have this in mind. I have also asked them to consider what parts of the curriculum lend themselves best to remote learning. We learnt a lot during the last closure, and should we need to close again, hope to deliver work to all our pupils in a more consistent and structured way.

It is true that the exact shape of this year is unclear to us at this point, in terms of whether we will need to close again and in terms of what form the examination series will take. **We are working towards a normal program of exams** at this point, and know that the assessment in a few subjects will alter slightly from what it would usually be. There is talk about delaying exams by approximately one month too, but that that is yet to be decided. We will keep you updated as we find out more.

Thank you again in advance for attending to the points I make above.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gibbs