

Dear Parents / Carers

Staggered return to school dates

Please be aware that we will be conducting another set of two Lateral Flow tests on all pupils, for whom we have consent, upon return to school in September. If you have previously given or refused consent for testing, unless you tell us otherwise we will assume the same for this round of testing. These will all be completed in the first week back. This means we will have to stagger pupils' return over the first two days of term as detailed below.

- Years 7,8,12 and 13 to return on Monday 6th September.
- Years 9,10 and 11 to return on Tuesday 7th September.

If your child tests positive in either of the tests we will isolate them and contact you immediately, so you can come to school and take them home. I really hope that we start the term without having to do this, due to the clear and significant disruption it causes for so many people. You may already be aware that any pupil that travels on the same bus as anyone who tests positive has to isolate whilst they get a confirmatory PCR test, so please be aware that a handful of positive tests can have a significant knock on effect in terms of numbers of others having to isolate too. We are currently waiting for the latest guidance on these things but we will share them with you once they are established.

No masks needed

We will retain some aspects of last year's infection mitigation measures, and these will be shared with pupils upon their return. However, no pupil will have to wear a mask unless they choose to do so. We would encourage pupils to wear a mask in all communal areas. We will also retain the one way system of movement around the school, which has been successful in ensuring the corridors do not become too crowded and jammed.

Change in the timings of the school day

As previously mentioned, we start this year with new timings. We start and finish 5 minutes earlier than last year, and now have 4 lessons before lunch. There is also an earlier morning break, so the gaps between breakfast, morning break and lunch are significantly better spaced, and morning break is slightly longer to allow a genuine break. For your information, timings are as follows -

Lesson 1 - 8.45-9.50

Lesson 2 - 9.50-10.50

Break - 10.50-11.10

Lesson 3 - 11.10-12.10

Lesson 4 - 12.10-1.10

Lunch - 1.10-1.55

Tutor/Assembly time - 2-2.25

Lesson 5 - 2.25-3.25

Preparing your children for school

Please support us by ensuring your children are fully equipped for school from 'Day 1'. Full uniform (in particular no trainers or skin tight trousers) and a well stocked pencil case are crucial for setting the right tone and demonstrating to your child your support for their education. If you have a son or daughter who struggles to be independent, please organise them each day until they can do it for themselves. We ask you to be really proactive in managing your children so that they are ready to work hard and learn lots once they arrive here.

Behaviour expectations

The stop-start nature of the last two academic years has not been great for anyone, and we feel many pupils have become less 'school shaped' than before. Subsequently, we intend to make sure our standards and expectations are completely clear and clarified to all pupils upon our return in September. One of these will be related to the wearing of correct uniform. We believe we are fair and reasonable when enforcing the school's uniform expectations, two of which are that we ask for shoes and not trainers, and that trousers are full length, straight cut and not stretchy. Before the start of term, please ensure your child has shoes. Also, please make sure trousers are as just described. We understand that many parents do have to go through a minor battle to get their children into what they know are acceptable trousers, but please be supportive and ensure they are acceptable for school. If uniform is not in line with the school's stated requirements we will contact you and may ask you to keep your child at home whilst you purchase acceptable items.

Cashless School introduction

You will be aware that our plans to introduce this from September were halted, as we felt we all needed more time to prepare fully. We will be in touch again later in term as we do fully intend to introduce this as soon as we are ready to do it properly.

I hope you are enjoying the break! Please contact us if there is anything you wish to be clarified further.

Regards

Tim Gibbs