

March 5th 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Return to full school opening

I am sure we are all delighted at the thought of having all our students back in school over the next week. Hopefully you have had the opportunity to read the guidance I sent out at the beginning of the week. We will continue to do all we can to keep the school safe for staff and students and only remove or reduce any current restrictions in line with Government guidance as it emerges.

Students should continue to access work on Synergy next week until they return to school. There may be less in the way of live lessons as staff are needed to help supervise returning students around school as we go through the initial covid testing.

We have an extremely high take up of covid testing in school at 85% of the student population. I am very grateful to the staff who have done the training and are running and managing the test centre. I will send out further details in the next couple of weeks about the twice weekly home testing which is due to start week beginning March 22nd. Today 44 Year 11s came in for their first test and all the systems went very smoothly.

Please remember to contact school if your child has an exemption from wearing a face covering so that we can issue a lanyard.

DfE advice on travelling to school

- if you live a short distance from your school or college, walk, cycle or scoot to and from school wherever it is possible and safe to do so
- avoid sharing a car with anyone outside of your household or support bubble
- if you are using public transport to get to school or college, plan ahead and allow more time for your journey
- when you are travelling by public or dedicated school transport, don't forget to:
 - wear a face covering (unless you are exempt, including if you are aged 11 and under). It is important you wear them for the entirety of your journey, including inside a bus or train station

- social distance where possible
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly
- be considerate to fellow passengers and staff.

There is a letter from Heads of Year at the end of my message about being ready to return to learning.

Laptops and devices that have been loaned out

As a school we have loaned out around 150 devices during lockdown – from the supply we received from the DfE and our own stock. We will contact families about the plans for these at a later date but this will be after Easter and there is no need to return them when students come back to school next week.

Year 11

Teacher assessment for grades this summer is a huge responsibility on schools and we will do everything we can to make this a fair and objective process - but we need the evidence to justify a grade and that cannot just be what has been done so far. Over the course of the next three months, Year 11 will have a series of in-class supported assessments in each subject to provide the school with further evidence for the grade we will eventually award. There will be very clear and targeted preparation for each of these assessments and students will know exactly what it is they are preparing for without being given the actual questions.

This will give those who have been working hard the chance to build up evidence for even higher grades while for others it may be an opportunity to improve significantly on what they have done so far. There is everything to work for and I would encourage all Year 11 to really engage with this process over the next few weeks to put themselves in the best possible situation. Staff will only finalise grades at the beginning of June based on all the identified evidence available.

To help with your understanding of the assessment process and what needs to be done in each subject, we are holding a Year 11 Parents evening on Thursday March 18th using the school cloud system that has proved very popular with parents of Year 8, 9 and 10 as well as staff. I will send specific details to Year 11 parents about this on Monday.

Thanks

Finally, as we do prepare to re-open the school fully, I would like to express my thanks to all the staff for the work done to provide remote learning and supervise those students who have been in school. There has been a fantastic effort and an awful lot learned about technology in a short space of time! I would also

like to thank you as parents and carers for the support of your children during lockdown and for responding so positively to the school. In the survey of Year 9 parents following parents evening, 65% thought the remote provision had been very good with a further 27% saying good and we have received many really positive messages which has been lovely. As we return to full school we have the privilege and responsibility to continue to care for each of our students, adapt the curriculum as necessary and hopefully it won't be too long before we can reintroduce the extra-curricular opportunities for a full school experience.

With best wishes



Andrew Waller
Headteacher

Letter from Heads of Year

Dear Parents and Pupils,

Welcome back!

We can't wait to have everyone back in our year groups. We've greatly missed you all, and can't wait to get back to the business of purposeful learning.

We know that, for parents and students, there is a lot to think about at the moment. You might be worried about certain aspects of returning. Please know that we, and your Mentors, are here to help, and are really keen to make the return as easy as possible.

In these first weeks back, we want to help every student to get the basics right.

And the most basic thing to get right is being prepared to learn.

So, if there's one thing we can ask parents and students to focus on it's this: equipment.

Every student should come to school with:

- A Blue or Black Pen (plus one spare)
- A Purple Pen
- Coloured Pencils
- A Pencil Sharpener

- An Eraser
- A 30 cm ruler
- A Scientific Calculator
- A Compass
- A transparent protractor
- Highlighters (these are optional)
- An A4 Sketch Book
- A pair of Headphones

And this should all be housed in a good quality pencil case.

This list has been the same all year, so students should have most of the things on the list.

If, when you check, you have certain things missing, please go down to the shops (or go online) to replace them. We know it's been hard to get out to the shops over recent months, and so you might be missing certain items. But we really need you to replace them as quickly as you can.

Towards the end of last term, an increasing number of students were turning up to school with most of these items missing. When this happens, lessons are held up, and those students can't give their best. It also forced teachers to donate large amounts of their own stationery, which they had often paid-for with their own money (Covid 19 restrictions mean we can't really lend things out, and take them back in).

So we want to be clear about expectations:

You have a responsibility to have the correct equipment in school. Please check that you have these items and remedy any gaps as quickly as possible.

If your financial situation makes this hard, please contact your child's Mentor and we will see what we can do to help.

And finally, please take this letter in the spirit it is meant. We are desperate to make every minute count, and to help your children to do their very best.

Thank you.

Your Heads of Year