



Monday 30th November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

With only three weeks of term remaining, I thought I would provide you with an update on what is currently happening in school and our plans for the weeks remaining in the lead up to Christmas.

Year 11 mocks began today and students entered their exams in a calm and purposeful manner. A number of Year 11 students are self-isolating and their mock exam papers have been posted home for them to complete. Key exams in English, Maths and Science will take place in school on their return alongside those GCSE courses with additional papers.

We had considered pushing the mocks into the New Year but recognising that Christmas may result in even more families having to isolate and the resulting reduction in time between these exams and the March mocks (which were introduced last year), we thought this was the most sensible way forward. As in every year, the mocks will allow staff and students to identify specific gaps in knowledge and is critical in enabling them to revisit specific areas in the build-up to next summer.

Whilst our mock season is not what we had originally planned, with the DFE determined that formal GCSE exams will be held in the summer and Year 11 having missed out on formal end of year exams at the end of Year 10, giving students the experience of sitting exams in the hall under formal conditions was seen as being an integral part of their preparation for their GCSEs. Rest assured, in the very unlikely event that the DFE opts for using CAGs, only assessments completed in school will contribute to any Centre Assessed Grades. **We are also updating our frequently asked questions in the exams section of our website** with additional information to support Year 11 parents.

I would also like to share that since our return after half term how impressed we have been with the number of students in **Year 11 and Year 13** who have been **participating in extended coursework catch up sessions after school**. This reflects their determination, despite all the disruption they have experienced, to do the best they possibly can.

For those with children in **Year 10** we are piloting our **first ever virtual parents evening** on Thursday 10th December and, if successful, will use this for all year groups moving forward. Letters have been posted directly to Year 10 parents and the appointment window opens tomorrow for you to make appointments.

In Key Stage 3, we are really pleased at impact of the **fortnightly knowledge organiser online quiz homeworks** that students are completing. Regular review and practice plays a key role in cementing learning into a child's long-term memory and as this project has become embedded, and teething issues resolved, its impact is growing. The next phase in its development is to report to parents the scores the children achieve each fortnight and we are planning to launch this in January.

With regards to travelling to and from school, and following the recent positive Covid case on the Burtonwood bus, I have been in communication with the Local Authority who have been liaising with the bus companies. As a result of these discussions in the short term we are exploring buses having supplies of spare masks and hand sanitiser.



Furthermore, we are exploring with the LA and bus companies the introduction of CCTV on the buses which will not only support track and trace when cases occur, but also have the additional benefit on supporting safer travel for our students in the longer term. We are also taking the opportunity to update our bus information records and would ask that those that travel to and from school on a bus complete the short survey which will be circulated in the coming days.

For those that cycle to school, the Local Authority sustainability group have been in school providing free bike lights to students and we would welcome support from parents to encourage students to cycle safely and **the importance of wearing a bike helmet**. For those who drive their children to and from school we have been asked, particularly during all the road works, by local residents for waiting parents to respect local households and avoid parking in restricted areas.

With regards to our **measures to create a Covid safe learning environment**, and in line with DFE guidelines about air circulation, windows in classrooms are being opened to reduce virus transmission. As the weather turns colder I would, therefore, like to remind parents of the need for students to wear additional layers under their uniform and not just coats or jumpers. Alongside keeping our school community safe and minimise risk, we are mindful of **standards around school** and we will be reminding students of our high expectations with regards to behaviour and uniform.

In the lead up to Christmas, we have adapted our festive celebrations in school for the final week and whilst we cannot hold our annual House Christmas assemblies, we are confident that we will still create a positive end with festive cheer to what has been a challenging calendar year. Our **Year 7s will be performing a virtual Carol concert** which is being streamed to local care homes and we have a number of fundraising and appeals taking place to support the most vulnerable in our local and wider community.

As we have done in previous years, we are supporting **The Salvation Army** in supplying hats, gloves and socks for their homeless appeal and **The Warrington Foodbank** appeal with donations of canned and packet foods. We have been informed that, understandably linked with the current challenges faced by many, the demand on these services is greater than ever. Students are encouraged to donate, where possible, and Form Tutors are collecting items each morning in PDR.

On **Wednesday 16th December, we will be holding our Christmas dinner** and whilst we are unable to offer our usual Christmas meal with all the trimmings, our catering team will be providing a hot food festive menu in all catering areas, with students receiving more information next Monday. Students are also encouraged to wear a Christmas jumper, tie, socks or even a piece of tinsel / festive item on their blazer on Wednesday 16th December with a suggested £1 donation on the day, with all donations supporting **Save The Children charity**.

As a school community, we have always given so generously in support of others and I would like to thank all of our staff and students for contributing so positively and for helping to make a difference in our local and wider community, we are extremely proud of your fantastic fund raising.

At this challenging time, if you, or someone you know from within our school community, are currently struggling and require support in the lead up to the festive period, please do make contact with your child's House Office as we are here to help and will treat all information shared confidentially.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. Please continue to stay safe as we move out of the National lockdown and do keep in touch with us regarding any concerns you may have as we move towards the festive period.

Yours faithfully,



Mr John Shannon
Headteacher