



16th December 2021

Dear Parents,

End of Term Letter

As we approach the end of the Autumn Term this letter includes an update on school life, information about the end of this term, information for the new term and some support information for in-between. This is a lengthy letter but it includes lots of information related to Covid-19 testing and reporting arrangements, so please take some time to read it all.

Reflecting on the Term

As we head into the Christmas holidays it is a perfect time to reflect on this term and celebrate some of the achievements our school community have been involved in. Despite all of the challenges the term has presented, we have had many successes and lots of the traditional, pre-Covid activities have returned safely to school. Our extra-curricular clubs and activities are flourishing again and we have seen many of our individual students, along with our school teams, achieve success in their sporting and dramatic endeavours. The Eco club is thriving and with the new-build breaking ground in January on our carbon neutral/eco- friendly new school, there are many exciting opportunities ahead.

It has been a pleasure to welcome you back into school for Information Evenings, Tutor Evenings and our Christmas Concert production, which was highly acclaimed by all who saw it; with our Primary school audience members stating “their singing was like a sweet choir of angels” and “everyone could tell how perfect the performance was and your actors and staff were so creative”. Thank you to all who have supported our school this term in any way.

Our PSHCE days have supported our students with their wider education and provided key information on relationships, being safe and their future careers; we look forward to our next one on Tuesday 18th January.

Our Student Leaders have quickly taken on their role and responsibilities and are an important part of both in-school life and whole school events. We would like to thank them for giving freely of their time.

This week it has been lovely to see so many of our students and staff wearing their Christmas Jumpers in support of Save the Children and our Christmas lunches provided a delicious celebration.

End of Term Arrangements

On Friday we will be celebrating the term’s achievements in our end of term assemblies along with some festive performances before we close for Christmas at 12.30pm. For their mental health and wellbeing, we have decided to proceed with bringing the students together and it is, therefore, essential that they take their LFT tests in the morning. This is a normal school day in terms of uniform and appearance though an extended break will provide an opportunity for all students to purchase food, with those students eligible to receive a free school meal being given the opportunity to purchase one. Our usual school buses have been arranged to collect our students at 12.30pm, as there will be no provision for students to stay in school after this time.

Outstanding education at the heart of the community

Year 11

We are approaching the end of the Practice Examination series for this year group. As a school we would like to recognise their excellent conduct, coupled with their resilience and preparation for the exams. In the New Year, we will communicate these results with students and families through our 'Mock Results Day' on Monday 24th January, which rehearses the exams results session in the summer.

Financial Hardship and/or Family Difficulties

Along the lines noted, we are highly aware that for many families this is a very difficult time, with rising costs of living, heating and food bills and the pressure of Christmas. If you are worrying about this, please let us know so that we can consider any support we can give to you. Likewise, if you have any other concerns going into this Christmas period that we can help with, even if it is just to point you in the direction of where help can be obtained, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your call or email will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Staffing Update and Timetable Changes

The end of a term is often a time when we say goodbye to some of our staff and welcome new ones. This Christmas, we are saying a big thank you and best wishes for the future to Mr Case our SENDCO, Mrs Lee our Head of our Foundation Faculty, Mr Studdart and Mr Lynch, teachers of History and Mrs Sykes, teacher of English. Their contribution to our learning community has gone far beyond the classroom and; whether they have been with us for one year or ten, they will be missed.

Following her maternity leave, we will welcome back Mrs Lyall as Head of History and our new House Progress Leader for Wiggins, Mrs Garrett, will be joining us and adding to the strength of the History department as an experienced History teacher. Mrs Bergon will be leading our Foundation team as Head of Faculty. Also joining our teaching team we will welcome Mrs Fellows (English) and Dr Iddon (Science). Mrs Higham will also be joining us in January as our new SENDCO and, with a wealth of experience, will continue to ensure the best provision for the students within her care.

There have been a number of small timetable changes for January which will be conveyed to all students during their tutor period on Wednesday 5th January P1.

Uniform and Appearance

As we return after the Christmas break, we would like to remind everyone of our expectations relating to uniform. The policy link can be found on this page <https://www.tarletonacademy.org/parents/academy-uniform> . A key feature of our policy is what we wear (uniform) and how we wear it (appearance). In summary, some key points of note are:

- Plain black, smart and study shoes
- Plain coats- no non-school outer garments such as jumpers/hoodies/fleeces/cardigans.
- School jumpers should be untucked and shirts should be tucked in
- One stud earring in the lobe of the ear (no other jewellery)
- Hair colour should be natural with no severe cuts or styles; it should not be cut shorter than a grade 2 and should not obscure a student's vision.
- Any make up, including false tan should be discreet; nail varnish and false nails are not allowed.

Covid-19 – Vaccinations for age 12 Upwards

The Government, the DfE and our Trust is strongly recommending that all our students are vaccinated. Please reconsider if this has not already happened as we are keen to reduce absence due to Covid-19 wherever possible and protect the health and wellbeing of all our students, staff and their families. There has been further mention in the media about a second vaccination for 12-15 year olds, but as yet we have not had any information from the School

Health Team. As and when we do, we will send you their communication. In the meantime, especially for those who have made enquiries, this is the link for those parents who are seeking a vaccination for their child who is twelve or above:

<https://www.westlancashireccg.nhs.uk/corona-virus/covid-19-vaccination-programme/local-vaccine-delivery/>

Covid-19 - Testing over Christmas

As directed by the Department for Education, we have distributed kits for students (and staff) to continue to test over the Christmas period and into the New Year to disrupt the chain of transmission in what may be a time of increased social mixing for some. The government have directed school staff and students to test when:

1. entering a high-risk setting (high numbers of people or people you do not live with)
2. you are meeting someone who is potentially vulnerable including those with underlying health conditions.

You should continue to report your test results via the NHS website, there is no obligation to report holiday tests to school.

Confirmed Cases of Covid-19 over the Break

Please remember, you need to tell school if your child has Covid-19 and you should report this to school by emailing enquiries@tarletonacademy.org. You will receive an automated reply which will be accessed on the INSET day on the 4th January. This will inform us of who is exempt from the testing programme and who will be absent as the term starts. Please include your official notification from NHS Test and Trace so that we can administer this correctly on the school system with regard to test exemption or isolation-related absence.

Testing after Christmas for the Start of the Spring Term

As with the start of previous terms, there is an expectation from the DFE, that we will begin the new term with a mass testing programme. We are reluctant to stagger the start of 2022 in order to minimise the time missed from school but we do recognise the need for limited social mixing and testing before lessons and moving around school begins. As such, we would like to complete the mass test in a different way that minimises disruption to families and the student's education, but makes sure that community transmission is halted as soon as possible.

On the *morning of Wednesday 5 January, school will start at 8.45am and there will be a tutor period session. During this session all students who are eligible will complete an LFD test.* This means that all students, even those who are asymptomatic, can be identified and isolated before passing on the virus to other members of our school community.

This test will be completed in the first hour of the day in tutor groups in their form room. Students will be instructed and supervised to administer a test, they will wait for the fifteen minutes required for the test to provide a result. Please note that in contrast to some of the home kits we have distributed recently, these tests are a new brand and they take a shorter amount of time to register a result.

If a student's test is negative, we will not contact you – assume it is negative unless you hear otherwise. If the test is positive, we will contact you and ask you if you can come and collect your child. This should be followed up with a PCR test.

If your child has any need that means they require some individual support to complete this test or if this arrangement would cause upset or distress, please let us know at enquiries@tarletonacademy.org and we will make alternative arrangements to conduct their test on site. The intention is to keep everyone safe and maximise time in school.

Face Coverings in January

Over the last few weeks both staff and students, unless exempt, have worn their face coverings in and around the school buildings. As ever, the support for this has been very pleasing and an indication of the care and compassion that exists in school. Rather than make a hasty decision in January and contact you again, and considering the recent

announcements by the government, we will continue to wear face coverings on our return in January. We will review this and contact you on Friday 7 January with an update.

Key Worker/Vulnerable Children

In the (hopefully) unlikely event that we would need to revert to home learning in January, we would still be providing on site provision for our most vulnerable students. If your child has previously been included in this, you do not need to do anything. However, if your child has not previously been included (this is especially important for our Year 7 students) or your child has previously been included but it would no longer be needed, please email us so that we can update our records and ensure appropriate provision is in place.

Important dates

Looking ahead to the New Year, please make a note of some key dates for your diary in our Spring Term 1:

- **Thursday 13th January** Year 9 Parents' Evening (Virtual)
- **Tuesday 18th January** PHSCE Day
- **Tuesday 18th January** On-line Safety - Parental workshop
- **Monday 24th January** Year 11 Mock Results Day
- **Thursday 27th January** Year 10 Parents' Evening (Virtual)
- **Thursday 10th February** Year 9 Options Evening
- **February Half term** Monday 14th to Friday 18th February

The New Build Begins

Today we walked the site with Wilmott Dixon in preparation for the next phase of our new build in January, when we 'break ground' and our school environment will start to feel a bit different. All students have had information assemblies about the new build and how it will impact on their daily life and we will be hosting a Parents' Evening in January to go through the next stages of the building and answer any questions.

Procedure for any School Closure

In the event of severe weather or an emergency situation which prevents us from opening, we will notify all parents via InTouch email/ Text message by 7.15am that we will be closed. It is vitally important that your contact details are up to date, please contact our school office on 01772 812 644 or enquires@tarletonacademy.org to notify us of any changes. Our school closure procedure can be seen on our website. <https://www.tarletonacademy.org/our-academy/procedures-in-the-event-of-a-school-closure>

Christmas Shut Down

School is closed over the Christmas break and this extends to all of our colleagues who work for the Endeavour Learning Trust in the Central Team. If you do contact school over the break, you will receive an automated response and these messages will be reviewed on Tuesday 4 January. The Spring Term starts on Tuesday 4 January and this is a calendared INSET day for staff, students are not expected in school. **School reopens for students on Wednesday 5th January at 8.45am.** In line with the message from the Department for Education, attendance is compulsory for all students.

Please note, **if Government guidance changes over the break, we may need to delay the start of term to address the preparations needed.** If there is any change, we will use all our usual channels to let you know.

We would like to thank you once again for your support, patience and kindness in what has been a testing term for everyone in the whole community and right across our county. Your supportive messages for what we have been doing have been very much appreciated by the team.

We will always work really hard to make sensible decisions in the best interest of everyone in school and our community. As ever, we are stronger together and your support is pivotal to make sure that our students thrive.

We look forward to, hopefully, welcoming back all our students on **Wednesday 5th January 2022 at 8.45am.**

It just remains for us to wish you and all your family and very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V Hill

Mrs V Hill
Headteacher