

5th March 2021

Dear families

Thank you for your support during lockdown. It hasn't been a pleasant time and I have been saddened to learn of so many family bereavements. I hope that the return to school on Monday has lifted the spirits of the students and we are very much looking forward to seeing them. My update to the students is copied below for your interest and I would be grateful if you could please reiterate the guidance regarding wearing facemasks in lessons and in social spaces. This is something that we are all simply going to have to learn to get used to and let us hope that it is only for a short period of time.

Best wishes

Nicholas Griffith

Dear year 12

I hope it has been a good week. We are all very much looking forward to seeing you all on Monday morning 😊

A quick reminder of the plan for your return to school is copied below.

- Please visit a local centre to get a covid lateral flow test on Sunday. In the case of a positive result please email me as soon as possible.
- We are expecting you all to be here before 8.30 on Monday ready for lesson 1 which is time with your House Mentor in the rooms listed below.
- Bro - C14, But - S12, Hrd - C16, Hsn - C18, Sch - G16 and Sel - DT LT.
- I will come to this lesson to give you a copy of your individual timetable.
- After period 1 it will be a normal school day and you may leave after your last lesson.

A key difference on our return relates to the use of face masks and I have copied details below which were sent to families on Wednesday. Please be clear that students who do not follow this clear guidance and who do not have an exemption will see removal of privileges such as the option to leave school before 4.15. These rules will be in place to protect you and your families.

The use of face masks

The government has announced that new advice applies to the use of face coverings by staff, pupils and students in schools in England.

“Where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff, pupils and students when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. Face coverings do not need to be worn by pupils and students when outdoors on the premises.

In addition, we now also recommend that in those settings where pupils and students in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms and during activities unless social distancing can be maintained. This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons.”

Therefore, in addition to our established routines of the wearing of face masks in the secondary phase in communal areas and corridors we will be expecting pupils in Years 7 to 13 to wear a face mask in classrooms where social distance cannot be maintained. This will be reviewed at Easter.

Pupils who have a medical exemption, a special educational needs exemption or an exemption on mental health grounds (including heightened anxiety) will not be expected to wear a face mask during lesson time. We are already aware of some pupils who are exempt, but if your child should also be exempt, please email your child’s House Administrator with the details. This applies to all pupils in Years 7 to 13.

Please ensure that your child has at least two facemasks each day. When not in use facemasks should be placed in a resealable plastic bag. Pupils must learn not to touch the outside of their masks and to change it when it becomes damp. Disposable facemasks must be placed in the black bins, which are situated around the campus both outside and in the classrooms. Pupils must wash hands or use hand gel after touching their masks.

Further, we recognise the challenge and potential communication barriers for pupils being taught by a teacher wearing a face mask. The power of a teacher’s facial gestures in engaging with pupils is not to be underestimated. Therefore, we will be advising our teachers to endeavour to maintain social distancing in classrooms so that they are able to remove their face masks when group teaching from the front of the classroom.

Have a lovely weekend

Mr Griffith