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9<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

A very small number of positive Covid cases in Years 8 and 9 have made this another very difficult week in school. With current self-isolation rules still in place, inevitably this has led to a significant number of students having to self-isolate, some of whom had only returned to school for one day after a previous period of period of self-isolation. Thank you once again to parents for the understanding and support shown in such unfortunate circumstances. All we can do as parents and teachers at this stage is support the students affected as much as possible and look forward to the fact that this will not be a part of school life in September.

Amongst all the challenges of the week, having our future Year 7 students in school has put a smile on everybody's faces though - their sense of excitement at being in their high school a wonderful contrast to the weariness felt with the restrictions we are still operating under. Although they had to visit in their Year 6 class 'bubbles', I'm delighted that they were able to come and very much hope that the visit will enable them to have a much less anxious summer and to look forward to joining us in September.

### **Careers Day (Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July)**

Our current restrictions, and in particular our desire to minimise as much as possible any potential disruption caused to summer plans as a result of further Covid cases, means that the final week of term will necessarily be much more low-key than would usually be the case. A definite highlight though will be our Careers Day next Wednesday and I hope that students are looking forward to what will be a really engaging and informative day in school:

**Year 7 (Periods 1-4, with a form tutor lesson Period 5)** - Team building and leadership, developing employability skills. **Please note that students in Year 7 should come to school in their PE kit on Wednesday.**

**Year 8 (Periods 1-4, with a form tutor lesson Period 5)** - 'Careers in Engineering' day. Students will be working with Urenco on sustainable energy and energy conservation.

**Year 9 (Periods 1-4, with a form tutor lesson Period 5)** - 'Learn to Earn' workshops led by Young Enterprise, focusing on career opportunities and financial capability (personal skills and talents, career choices, salaries, earnings, tax, the cost of living, financial planning and budgeting).

**Year 10 (Periods 1-5)** - Careers in Construction and the importance of mathematics to career prospects. Students will be working with Turner and Townsend on a project based on our 3G Football Pitch which is currently under construction.

**Year 12 (All Day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)** - Workshops led by the NCS (National Citizen Service), focusing on employability skills and resilience:

Wednesday 14th July - team building. These activities will be outside (**students should come to school dressed appropriately for this**).

Thursday 15th and Friday 16th July – workshops on First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Employability skills, Public Speaking and Presentation Skills.

*We very much don't want students who are currently having to self-isolate to miss out on the learning that the above will be provide. Hence resources for these students will be posted on their form tutor (not their timetabled subject) Microsoft 'Team' and students should log in Period 1 on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July when a member of staff will be able to provide guidance and support with the resources.*

### **Last Day of Term**

Just a reminder that term finishes at 12.45pm next Friday. Next Friday will be an 'Own Clothes Day' in school, with a £1 donation for our local charities (Countess of Chester Charity, Alder Hey and Claire House) being collected first thing in the morning.

### **September**

The government this week published their guidance for schools following the proposed move to Step 4 of the roadmap for restriction-lifting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July, [Schools COVID-19 operational guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/87422/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance)

The government's hopes for schools in September are clear: no more use of 'bubbles'; no more contact-tracing or student self-isolation; no social-distancing requirements and no face-covering wearing. What is less clear is what powers Local Authority Public Health Teams will have to re-introduce bubbles/face-coverings/social distancing/etc in the event of high/rising numbers of cases in the region. Given that is currently the case, and lockdown-lifting is very likely to lead to further rises over the summer, this does appear to be a possibility.

Hence despite the government's new guidance for schools, it isn't possible at present to have a definitive view of what life might be like in school in September and I will need to keep parents updated over the second half of the summer break. What is clear is that the requirement for students to take two supervised Lateral Flow Device tests in school at the beginning of September will necessitate a staggered start to the Autumn Term. Rather than all students starting back on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September as originally planned, to allow us to test all students on their first day in school will mean that some years will start on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>, some on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and then others on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September when the whole school will be present on site for the first time.

I'll confirm arrangements for the start of next term in my final parent letter of the term next week, in which I will confirm arrangements for the Sixth Form enrolment which will also take place at the very beginning of September.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher