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CIRCULAR 2021/22 TL036

To: Parents/Guardians of all enrolled students
Cc: Bursar

January 2022

We are very pleased to welcome back our students today and wanted to update parents on a change to our calendar and how we plan to use Google Classroom this term as well as some other important information for the term ahead.

Calendar change

We had planned to have an open day on Wednesday 12th January and also a Year 12 careers event with only Year 12 in school on that date. Unfortunately, we have been forced to postpone both of these events due to the current restrictions as regards gatherings of people. As a result of this all students will attend school as normal on Wednesday 12th January and we will reschedule an open day later in the month hopefully. We do plan to have visits for prospective parents of P7 students after school time to minimise any risk of transmission and if you know any parents this may be suitable for please ask them to contact the school office on 02844612115 to make an appointment. We will be advertising this in the coming days. Visitors will not be in the school during the school day when students are present.

Google Classroom

We have now been using Google Classroom successfully for classwork and homework and during lockdown periods of remote learning when large groups of students are working at home. The current situation is that Google Classroom will not be used for individual cases of students who are isolating or off for a period of 7 or 10 days as is the norm for isolation. This is not possible at the minute as teaching staff are delivering face to face lessons to students in school and it is not possible to also upload and mark work for students who are at home isolating. This guidance is taken from recent Department of Education advice which states:

"The Department recognises that schools will wish to support pupils as much as possible. However, in circumstances where teachers are continuing to teach face-to-face classes or a large number of teachers are unwell, expectations must be realistic. The Department fully recognises that it may not be possible for schools to provide the same volume of remote learning as during the extended period of closures in Spring 2021"

"if pupils are ill they should take time to rest and recover and should not be working from home"

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Principal: Stephen Taylor BA Hons. PQH

Students will of course be supported when they return to school with any work missed and any classwork taking place on Google Classroom will also be accessible but it is not possible to update Google Classroom every lesson for individual students. We would ask for parents understanding at this time and we will work as hard as we can to support all students when in school and where it is possible to also provide work for those isolating.

This would obviously change if a large number of students or entire year groups were working remotely for an extended period and work could then be accessed through Google Classroom.

Ventilation and school uniform

One of the main mitigating factors recommended for schools is good ventilation in classrooms. To this end we have CO2 monitors that are used in classrooms to measure the ventilation and window and doors are opened when required to ensure good ventilation. As a result of this and with the onset of colder weather it may be necessary for some students to wear their school zip top or school hoodie as well as their shirt and jumper under their blazer at times to stay warm in the next few months. On days that students have PE they are also allowed to wear in their school PE kit as the recommendations are that changing facilities in schools are not to be used. We would ask that students wear school PE kit and school zip tops only as we are aware that parents have purchased these at the start of the school year and they should be used rather than branded hoodies and sportswear. If there are issues with purchasing any of these please contact the College and we will be happy to help where possible. We are not asking for any new items of uniform to be purchased but only those that have been purchased already to be worn at the correct times.

Lateral flow testing

We are expecting a delivery of lateral flow tests today and those students who have signed up to use them twice weekly will receive them when they arrive. If you have not signed up for these for your child and would like them to have access to these please contact us on 02844612115 and this can be easily arranged.

Stephen Taylor
Principal