



ORMISTON DENES ACADEMY

9th October 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

In previous years, schools would now be getting ready to open their doors to hundreds of parents and children of current Year 6 students, showing them round and really seeing the school in action. It is therefore very sad that parents are in the position of not experiencing what has been taken for granted in the past, the buzz of being part of a large group, chatting and asking questions. Meeting students and hearing what they have to say. We have worked hard to give you a taste of what we are like as a school, our ethos and values; what makes us unique and if you take a look at our new prospectus I hope that what we value comes across as intended.

<http://www.ormistonden.es.co.uk/information-for-year-6/>

As I have highlighted numerous times, we are continually reviewing our processes and procedures and making adjustments. This can be for a variety of reasons with the priority always being the health and safety of everyone in school. As a result of a recent review, we are making amendments as to how you are informed should your child receive a C2 consequence. From Monday, you will be notified exclusively through our Go4Schools software. Whilst staff may supplement this with further contact home, ensuring you have access to our Go4Schools platform will ensure you receive the most up to date information. We also recommend downloading the Go4Schools mobile phone app and enabling push notifications, so that these updates will come through in real-time. Should you have any questions or require further information regarding specific incidents, policy or the Go4Schools platform, please do not hesitate to contact us. A quick start guide toGo4Schools is also attached.

On the positive side, I have been talking with senior leaders about a new approach to student voice through the year group structure and having a real focus on rewards. Continuing with this theme, I met with a Year 9 student on Wednesday who had written a poem for our competition. I have to say that it was brilliant, all about his positive and enjoyable experiences at Ormiston Denes so it was fantastic to not only read it but also chat with him.

Assessed work, for all year groups completed on paper, will now be marked and feedback provided to students after the papers have been quarantined for a 72 hour period; meaning our students will now receive detailed feedback on any assessed work. Books continue not to be marked to minimise the risk of a spread of infection. We will review this policy continually and keep you informed.

We are currently looking at providing a range of enrichment opportunities for students during their break times. Our two 30 minute breaks seem to be working (previously we had 20 minutes and 40 minutes) so the aim is to provide different opportunities during the school day, as well as some additional learning after school. The bubbles work well and to date, students have taken them very seriously which I really appreciate. They do restrict social space however so to help in this area, the sports hall is now also being used (not equipment) to provide additional free space on wet weather days; whilst following Covid guidelines.

All the wet weather we have had recently has made us approach our local uniform supplier [Screens](#), to see if they had a waterproof jacket suitable for school. I am pleased to say that as an optional PE item we can now offer a



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Mitre Edge PE waterproof jacket for £11.95. It will have Ormiston Denes branding and can be worn during outside PE lessons, as well as the journey into, and home from school. Blazers are still expected to be worn as usual and again, this is just an optional item and you are not obliged to buy one as part of the Denes uniform.

It is not that long ago when the news was always about Brexit and I wished that something else would be in the headlines; Covid has now taken over it would seem. I agree when people say that life should go on but I think we need to be much more cautious again, not only within school but in our wider family community. When getting this message out to the school community I have to say that I really miss assemblies. Virtual is fine but it lacks the atmosphere; you can't interact so it becomes quite impersonal, despite our best endeavours. I continue to emphasise that we need to wash our hands regularly, under our current status, students and staff can wear a face mask should they wish and we must try to keep our distance (2 metres). Our new behaviour policy also emphasises 'no touching' which we have had to be reminding some students of recently.

Last Sunday, we had the most fantastic day down in London and the words of both my boys as we left will stay with me forever; "we must do this more often". We visit them quite a bit so to have your 28 and 29 year old sons make a comment like that, you know you've done something right.

Have a fantastic weekend and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Nixon".

Jim Nixon
Principal