



23rd April 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

Good weather always makes a difference, not only to how people feel generally but also how a school operates and this past week has certainly shown that to be true. It means that students can get out outside and enjoy themselves during both breaks with plenty of space to run around.

Year group bubble changes

With national restrictions easing and in keeping with the government guidelines, we feel we can now relax some of our restrictions on where students can go during their social times. With effect from **Tuesday 4th May**, we are going to allow Year 10 and Year 11 students to mix in their social times (this will become our Key Stage 4 bubble). Years 7, 8 and 9 will also be able to mix with each other during their social times (this will become our Key Stage 3 bubble). All classroom lessons will remain in separate year group bubbles for the time being.

We will be holding virtual assemblies next week to let students know and will continue to provide guidance on social distancing and good hand hygiene.

These merges mean we can now open up the PE changing rooms as before, negating the need for students who have PE to wear their PE kit all day. Therefore, from Tuesday 4th May all students must arrive and wear full school uniform at all times. If they have PE timetabled, they bring their kit in a PE bag and get changed just before the lesson – as they did prior to Covid. There will be no exceptions to the wearing of full and correct school uniform.

This merge also means we can open our dining room again. Lunch breaks will remain staggered with the Key Stage 3 bubble accessing the main dining room during break 1 and Key Stage 4 bubble accessing the main dining room during break 2.

We have considered that some of our Year 7 students, who have been restricted to only seeing one small part of our school and not having had any interaction with any other year groups, may feel a little overwhelmed and anxious about this move. We have therefore cordoned off a private Year 7 area, near our dining hall that only Year 7 students will be able to access, should they feel the need to.

These small but positive steps are really exciting for the school and we hope we can rely on your support to remind your children to behave appropriately, remembering that COVID is still all around us, so they are to continue to be sensible in their interactions with their friends.

Standards and expectations

We have continued to emphasise the basics this term, arriving punctually and in school uniform and bringing the right equipment. I doubt you will have had a plumber or electrician come round your house and say they have left their tools at home, or that you will have arrived for an event or work in the wrong clothing. In addition to this, I am more that aware that because of Covid we have been unable to mark student books as we did before the pandemic. As a result, there is no doubt that in many cases, presentation of work has not been to our usual high standards, even if the content has been strong. From next week, we are having a push on 'presentation' and we have also devised a new approach to marking so that your child will continue to receive good quality education but with an increase in formal assessment.

And finally

This weekend will be fairly quiet with some scone making Sunday lunchtime, alongside house decorating and taking Oscar our dog out for a walk. He is getting on a bit having celebrated his 13th birthday recently, the equivalent of 91 years old in human terms. We call him the George Clooney of dogs as he still gets admiring glances despite his age. One of the places we walk is called Willingham Woods and in the good weather it is packed with people. What is particularly pleasing is that the wood, and all the walks and ponds, were designed by my father-in-law many decades ago and here they are being enjoyed by thousands of people every week in 2021. He worked for the forestry commission and often talked about how his work and designs were for the next generation, an incredible legacy.

Have a brilliant weekend.

Yours faithfully



Jim Nixon
Principal