

**HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH ASPIRATIONS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS**29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your support so far this year. As we approach the end of the first “month” we hopefully have started to settle back into a routine that somewhat resembles pre-pandemic slightly. Of course we recognise that the pandemic is far from over and that for many of our community there remains concern about what the coming winter months may look like. We continue to receive daily updates from the DfE and from the local Public Health Southwest team and continue to react to any changes in guidance that may be provided. Thank you for your continued understanding in this regard.

A couple of updates for this week:

**Tutor Evening** – next Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, we have our annual Tutor Evening. This is an opportunity for a short conversation with your child’s Tutor. An opportunity to “check in” and make that connection to your child’s first daily port of call. For Year 7 we are hosting on site as families have never had the opportunity to visit owing to the pandemic and our Open Evening last year having to be virtual. For Year 8 to Year 11 we will continue to make use of the online system for the time being and will do some surveys of families to work out preferences for future Tutor/Subject Evenings. Families should have already received booking instructions by email.

**End of Term** – although still a good few weeks away I wanted to ensure that all families know that Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> and Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October are INSET days. This means students will finish at their usual end of academy day time of 3pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**Continuation of LFD (at home) Testing** – we have been asked to encourage students to continue to test at home twice weekly using the provided test kits. In particular we are being asked to remind families of the importance of reporting **all** test results to the NHS (including the negative results). Current data suggests that many students are still partaking in testing but that reporting of negative results has dropped off. Whilst understandable (after all, it is the result that is important to you as a family) not reporting negative results is causing a skew of data and potentially making it harder for tracking of actual case levels. Whilst I appreciate that some families still have reservations about testing we are being asked to remind all of the community of the importance of testing as part of continuing to break transmission chains as we enter the traditional cold/flu season to reduce the chances of additional seasonal pressure on already exhausted health services.

**Reporting of Positive Results** – Tied in to the testing point above, can I ask that any positive coronavirus cases are confirmed to the school as soon as they are known and with clear information about whether it is a positive LFD or positive PCR. Although we no longer are required to undertake the tracing of close contacts we are still responsible for trying to identify anything that may be classed as an “outbreak”. We may therefore have to contact you for further information if students are absent just to establish required information. We thank you for your understanding as we try to continue to play our part in outbreak management for our community.

**Vaccine Programme** – As communicated in [my letter last week](#), the Government have confirmed that 12 to 15 year olds will be offered a single dose of the Pfizer/Moderna/Comirnaty vaccine. We have now had some



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communication from Sirona (the School Age Immunisation Service, SAIS, for the South West) to confirm that, for simplicity, this will be anyone in Year 8 to Year 11. If there are any Year 7 students who are 12 by the time the vaccinations take place they will still not be considered for the on site programme (though could attend a community clinic if they wished). The intention is to offer both the Covid **and** the seasonal Flu vaccine at the same time. Students and Parents/Carers can elect to receive both, one or the other or neither. Just to reiterate, **no student** will be forced or coerced to receive a vaccine, no parental consent will be overridden on school premises (though students who wish to go against their parent/carers consent will be eligible to attend a community vaccination centre where they will be considered against their age and competency to consent) and no student will be vaccinated if they do not consent regardless of their parent/carer wishes. As promised last week, we will publish the exact dates once they are known. Sirona have stated the consent forms will be sent to parents/carers 48 hours in advance so as soon as we know dates we will let the community know. The intention is for vaccinations to be offered before the end of this term and by mid November at the latest.

We have, unfortunately, received a number of malicious communications since the vaccine programme was announced. In particular there appears to be groups targeting malicious communications purporting to be bona-fide NHS groups or vaccine providers and asking us to disseminate the information to our community. We have managed to identify these as malicious but I mention it as a word of caution to urge our community to fact check any information you receive before acting on it. If you receive anything you are unsure about in regards the school based vaccine programme please do feel free to contact us for further clarification or guidance.

I will write again as soon as I have anything further to share.

Best wishes,

Mr C Shaw  
Principal