

HEADMASTER'S LETTER

14 June 2021

Dear Parent

'A week is a long time in politics', said Harold Wilson. I could say the same about a school.

Only a week or two ago, we were brimming with excitement about the resurrection of some of the activities that normally take place at the end of term. Not to be! I won't go into all the rationale here as the decisions are made using a jigsaw puzzle of the School's own risk assessments (both health and reputational), Public Health and Council advice, the nature of the event and the numbers involved and the risk appetite of those leading on them. In brief:

THE LONG GRASS

Sports Day will be competitors only; the **MCC and Duncan Moore Cricket** matches are players only; The **FRORGS Beer and Gin/Touch rugby festival** is postponed; **Prizegiving** and **Year 6/7 interface events** are migrating online; '**In the Heights**' (the musical theatre production) moves to September; **Jazz in the Quad** (a smaller event than others) becomes '**stay seated at your own numbered table and listen to the music in the Quad**' with no barbecue, **Choral Evensong** which the Choir normally sings in one of the Oxford University College chapels can only take place if we can persuade one of the reasonably convenient large, galleried London churches to accommodate our choristers. Even the staff party is cancelled.

I am so very sorry to staff, students and parents who spend time planning and supporting these valuable parts of the School year which very much bind our community together.

VALETE

We have quite a few changes in terms of both staff and governors this year. Inevitably, there was little movement last year as there were fewer opportunities or colleagues decided to remain in place to support the School, which was much appreciated. We have a combination of retirements, relocations and promotions - all of which are exciting for those concerned. What is really pleasing, is that we have had many strong fields for positions here and have a very talented, diverse cohort succeeding the talented, varied cohort who are moving on. I will start saying goodbye next week rather than my final letter of the term reading like a programme note to the Farewell Symphony!

TAGS

Mr Wallace and I have both written about the TAGS - not only the way in which students have worked and coped but also the hard work that has gone in by teachers to producing them. I act as 'Head of Centre' for examination board purposes and it was a huge relief to 'sign off' the submission with the Examinations Officer on Friday. I don't get involved in lobbying very often, but I have added my signature to a letter which requests that schools receive a healthy refund on examination fees.

HELL'S BELLS

I have also heard very good reports about the attitude of our boys to the 'End of Year' and UCAS exams which have taken place. Unfortunately, on Friday morning, our Fire Alarm was activated by a system error (now resolved) which disturbed a number of exams. Although I donned my recently provided '*gilet bleu-canard*', my usual duties were curtailed as I was looking after some officials who were visiting the School. I was very pleased to hear that boys were impeccable in their coping with the disruption, returning seamlessly to finish their exams.

YEAR 13

A reminder to Year 13 parents to ask their sons to sign up to the OW website and the LinkedIn accounts - see last week's letter for more information.

WILD 24

I'm quite sure that some of your sons don't need much encouragement to have a wild 24 hours, but this was a rather different experience. A group of our lads went off to Dartmoor National Park for a unique 24-hour coaching journey. The trip allowed students to explore the open moor, high rocky tors, ancient forest, rivers and sites of human spirituality while undertaking 1-1 coaching sessions, an overnight wild camp (no tents) sleeping under the stars and a number of mindfulness and reflection exercises. This was a very successful weekend in the beautiful soundings of the Northern Moors. I am certain they returned home feeling refreshed, reconnected and ready for whatever comes next. Many thanks to Mesdames Turney and Osborn for facilitating the experience and supporting students in the field.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Ben Harris, OW and former 1st XV captain, for being selected in the GB7s squad for Tokyo. I'm sure you'll join me in sending congratulations to Ben.

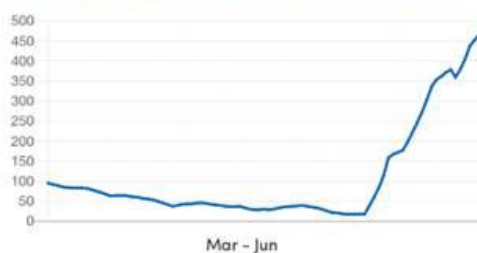
Just occasionally, I receive feedback that many of my comments of commendation are about sport. I don't have a press team scouring for information, I am very reliant on what I am told. It is always so good to share great news, so please do send anything in that will inspire our young people through the success and determination of others.

LFD TESTS

Finally, can I please urge you to ensure your son continues with this twice-weekly ordeal. We know the Delta variant is increasing rapidly and we need to do all we can to keep the School safe and open to everyone. We are hearing of increased cases in local schools, so let's try and be the exception rather than the rule.

Active COVID cases Wycombe

[We've updated our trendlines. Learn more](#)

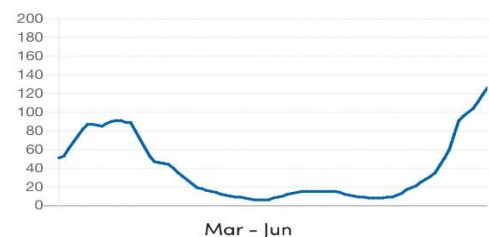


470 Active cases in your area >

Up by 95 from last week

Active COVID cases Chiltern

[We've updated our trendlines. Learn more](#)



126 Active cases in your area >

Up by 50 from last week

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Philip Wayne