

11 February 2021

Dear Parents

Six weeks ago, we were all set for a full school return, only to discover a late change of plan and an immediate move back to remote teaching. The way your son and his teachers have adapted once again has been very impressive. Despite not having the concerts, events, fixtures and evening face to face meetings, it has still felt an incredibly exhausting and rewarding half term.

It is probably a good sign that we are delivering a comprehensive education to your son, if he too is feeling in need of a break. Whilst none of us will have the chance to escape the household chores this half term (despite my best efforts), I hope you are all afforded some much-needed rest. I cannot express how much it has meant to staff to receive your kind emails of thanks and encouragement; they fully deserve this rest. And, so do all of you who have had to adapt and juggle your way through this lockdown period.

### **The Great Unknown**

Whilst we would never wish a holiday away, we will look forward to some clarity on the next steps of a school return. We are still lacking guidance on whether it will be a staggered return, whether we will provide Lateral Flow Testing and crucially, the detail on assessments for Years 11 and 13. This information is due to come to schools in the week beginning 22 February. We have worked hard to prepare for every eventuality to ensure the pupils and staff across the whole school will be appropriately supported.

### **Year 11 and Year 13 – March Tests and Assessments**

As you are already aware, the government have announced that the earliest date for the reopening of schools will be Monday 8 March. Our Assistant Headteacher, Mr Eve, wrote to you on Monday this week to let you know that if our Year 11 and Year 13 students return to school on that date, then they will be taking a full series of tests and assessments, under controlled conditions. The exact timetable of the tests is being finalised and will be communicated to our students as soon as the government confirm that schools are reopening. At this point, however, we can say that the Year 13 assessments will be scheduled first, starting from 8 March; the Year 11 assessments would start later, on 15 March. The format and timings of the assessments will be similar to the Mock Exams, which we were not able to run in January. A complete list of revision topics for Year 11 students will be sent out later today. Specific guidance regarding the content of the Year 13 assessments will come directly from your son's teachers.

### **Co-Curricular, Music, Sport & Art Challenges – Years 7-13**

Please can I encourage you to read Mr Clatworthy's letter regarding half term challenges for the boys (should be with you by the end of the week). It includes details on a Geocaching challenge, a Music song writing challenge, Sports half term holiday hijinks and an Art Creative Name Project, as well as further half term holiday lockdown activities.

We are very conscious of the possibility of life being rather 'groundhog day-ish' for our community, and we have designed this comprehensive programme to support the social and emotional wellbeing for our boys and their families. There is no expectation, no compulsory involvement, this is just for fun, for mindfulness, and to promote a sense of community. Please do encourage your son to check all the opportunities out; there is sure to be something that suits him.

### **ZAG Keyboards**

Can we please ask you to urge your son to look after his keyboard. Keyboards that we have sent back to ZAG for replacement under the warrantee programme have been rejected because of their poor condition, which is frustrating for all. We would really appreciate parental support in this, thank you.

### **End of Term timings**

As is usual for the end of a half term we will finish this Friday at 3pm. Please remind your son that Period 7 will begin at **2pm**.

### **PA 500 Club**

The PA are continuing to work on creative ways to support the school. Indeed, the Sushi Evening sold out quicker than a Spice Girls Reunion Concert! Please click [here](#) to support the 500 Club.

We wish you a wonderful half term; let's hope we see a bit more of Spring next week!

Kind regards

**Alex Wallace**  
**Deputy Headmaster**