



Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing with autumn term news and information about arrangements for the start of the spring term.

## **Autumn term news**

This term has been one of supporting students to feel part of our community, particularly those in Key Stage 3 with no or little prior experience of learning in specialist rooms and freely moving about the site. Support has extended to giving time and space for the expression of feelings and using mindfulness strategies to focus on the present.

At this time of year, we look forward to all the promise of a new year. This is currently difficult in the circumstances with increasing Covid confirmed cases in London. Amber measures in school, implemented about a month ago have had impact on reducing student cases in school and eradicating staff cases. I hope that our students, staff and families will remain healthy over the holiday and be able to enjoy a restful and restorative break.

In our end of term musical performances and sixth form revue, enjoyed by all in our virtual assembly this morning, students were impressive and engaging as ever. Throughout this term, students have been involved in fundraising for a variety of charities including Crohns and Colitis UK, Diabetes UK and Haven House Children's Hospice, which provides specialist care to children who have life limiting or life threatening conditions. The students themselves have instigated all the fund raising. They have also been active through participation in the Student Council where among other things they have been considering effective paper goods collection from classrooms, to ensure minimal waste.

As well as being performers, artists, activists, leaders and socially engaged youth, our students have been making progress in their learning. Throughout this week, during assemblies, each year group has celebrated student progress in every subject. The shared celebration in every tutor group was joyful and a clear indicator of the community that is developed among our students. Celebration of others' achievements as much as one's own is a valuable quality that our staff are pleased to see across the school.

Careers talks and external speakers have inspired students as much as our newly launched staff lecture series, which will continue in the New Year. The staff lectures have been particularly popular and especially so after it became known that attendance carried House points! I hope all students will participate in the December House competitions, which are available to enter until the start of next term.

I am pleased to let you know that we have submitted two CIF (Condition improvement fund) Bids to the DfE by this week's deadline. Schools are invited to submit bids annually, for large-scale projects that require funding beyond the scope of monies provided to schools based on their student head count. Funds are awarded to successful projects based on a points system following review of the bid. We have submitted a project to improve school perimeter security with some additional security measures and another project to replace windows in school. Schools are usually informed in April of the following year whether their bid has been successful, with the hope that works will start next summer.

### **Arrangements for the start of term and lateral flow testing**

When school reopens after the holidays, there will be a staggered start to term to support LFD testing for all students with parental consent, on site as required by the DfE under current guidance. I will send you specific further details in due course but I am able to give you general information now.

The morning of Wednesday 5th January will be used for staff training and preparation of testing venues. Students in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 with parental consent for testing will come into school from 1pm to be tested and will then return home. Those who have tested negative will return to school the following day (Thursday 6th January) as long as their LFD test remains negative, to start lessons according to their timetable. Year 12 students will commence their mock examinations on Thursday 6th January.

Year 7 and 8 students with parental consent for testing will come into school on the morning of Thursday 6th January to be tested and will then return home. Year 9 students with parental consent for testing will come into school on the afternoon of Thursday 6th January to be tested and will then return home. Those students in years 7, 8 and 9 who have tested negative will return to school the following day (Friday 7th January) as long as their LFD test remains negative, to start lessons according to their timetable.

I am including a link here for those families who would like to give consent for the in-school testing session at the start of next term.

<https://forms.gle/7A5bdjm9ANMLFx3N8>

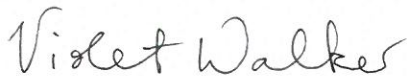
Subsequent tests will be completed at home. Previously given consent does not cover consent for January 2022 LFD testing on site.

**Please note anyone who has tested positive on a PCR test within the last three months up to 5<sup>th</sup> January is exempt from LFD testing on the return to school as they may return a false positive. As soon as three months have passed since a positive PCR result, students with consent can start LFD testing again.**

Should any changes to our start of term arrangements become necessary over the holiday period, I will write to you again.

With every good wish to you and your family for a healthy, restful and enjoyable holiday.

Yours faithfully



Violet Walker  
Headteacher