



4 December 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Well, we didn't quite make it through a Covid free term, did we? I have written to you all today separately on that matter so I hope you feel apprised of the situation. Public Health England have been very helpful and the process was very smooth in identifying close contacts because we had access to seating plans CCTV, bus lists and other key data which permitted us to make quick decisions on contacts and non-contacts in order to keep the whole community safe. Our next challenge is to ensure our online provision remains top quality over the next 6 days for Year 11. I am about to go into a meeting with the teaching staff to set our expectations!

We found out earlier this week that as we sit within a Tier 2 area face coverings remain compulsory for all students in covered areas such as canteens and corridors along with on school transport. For the most part our students have been excellent in both bringing face coverings and wearing them in corridors and other areas. As an average less than 1% don't bring their coverings each day so many thanks for your parental support in this matter.

This week saw us hold our second virtual parents evening with Year 11 in the hotseat. In the afternoon of the same day our Deputy Headteacher, Miss Bliss, hosted an excellent assembly in which the mock exam results were delivered along with a supportive message of how to move forwards and prepare for the real things next summer. The parental sign up rate of 86% for the parents' evening shows that this new style of sofa-based conversation seems to be very popular and our staff have echoed this sentiment. Our next one is on February 3rd for Year 7.

On Thursday afternoon we welcomed Paul Hannaford as a guest speaker as a part of our PSHE programme. Paul delivered a powerful message to Years 8,9 and 10 regarding the dangers of crime, drugs and gangs. As a headteacher I reflected long and hard about Paul coming in but having heard him and seen the incredibly attentive audience reaction to his message I am pleased we made the right choice. Unfortunately, and very sadly the real world can present young people with many difficult choices as they grow up and I hope this talk gave the students a realistic impression of where some of these wrong choices can lead so that they may navigate themselves positively over the next few years.

Today saw the first day of our 'Catch Up' programme with 21 Year 8 students receiving online tuition in Science to support them in catching up some of the work they missed during lockdown. This scheme will roll out further over the next few weeks with different year groups being targeted where we have noticed a deficit in knowledge and uses extra money the government has ring fenced for this purpose.

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School has started to look a little more Christmassy with a lovely tree donated very kindly by Playhatch Garden Centre stationed in our canteen.

I am also delighted that as a school we are supporting the Reading Foodbank this Christmas. Donations will be so welcome in what has been a very difficult year for many families and a few items from the list below could make a real difference.

The following foods are items that the charity have highlighted as key items:

- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned ready meals
- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned meat pies
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned fruit and puddings
- Steamed puddings
- Pasta sauce
- Rice
- Packs of tea bags
- Instant coffee
- Long life milk
- Baby food
- Toothpaste
- Nappies
- Soap/Shower Gel
- Baby milk
- Sanitary towels

If your child would like to donate food, please could they drop the items off to the main hall at the start of the school day. This is being run as a house competition so each item donated will be worth 1 house point to the students' house. The last day to donate will be Thursday 17th December.

And talking of good causes... our wonderful Parent association CESA are hosting a Christmas raffle with some brilliant prizes. All the money raised goes to student focused causes.

They are raffling 12 hampers for the 12 days of Christmas with some amazing prizes including:

- £50 in cash
- 2 massive 'liquid' hampers
- 1 technology hamper
- Ladies, gents and parent coaching
- A Food making session
- A Pimm's hamper
- Cleaning vouchers
- Teddies
- And lots more

Details of how to buy tickets are on CESAs Facebook and Twitter pages. Thank you also to those parents who bought tickets to our recent cake raffle which raised over £200.



Lastly, please do not hesitate to use our [FAB](#) and [DRAB](#) links as well as our [staff member of the week](#) nomination.

My staff member of the week this week is Miss Fay who organised our busking break on Thursday morning showcasing some of our brightest talents in the hall. These are lovely occasions and I'm really grateful she is hosting these talent shows.

My students of the week this week are Dan H, Kimi B, Isabella F P, Joseph C, Hibbah A and Ben R who all received Year 11 MOCK results that demonstrated huge levels of progress since primary school. We can't wait to see the real things next summer!

Take care and stay safe

Andy Hartley
Headteacher