

December 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

## Introduction

I would like to start by congratulating our students for the fantastic approach they have taken to their studies. Teachers are telling me that Year 13 student focus and engagement in the 50 minute lessons is exceptional, allowing them to make excellent progress through the content of their courses.

Attendance at the after school catch-up sessions is very pleasing with students taking full advantage of this additional support in preparing them for the summer exams and building their confidence after the lockdown period.

Please remember if students are feeling anxious or concerned about anything to do with school they should talk to their tutor or a member of the Sixth Form Team and we will endeavour to support them as best we can.

As a school, we continue to lobby the DfE, Ofqual and the government to consider carefully the approach taken to this summer's GCSE and A' Level exams. I wrote to Ofqual again on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November (letter available on our website and Twitter account) highlighting the issues schools in areas of high COVID rates are experiencing. Thank you for all the messages of support we have received in response to this letter. A number of parents have asked what they can do to reinforce the school message. If you wish to do this please write to Gavin Williamson, the DfE or Ofqual directly.

Attached to this letter is a Year 13 key dates sheet that provides information about Trial Exam dates, Reports and Parents Evening etc.

## Spring Term Timetable arrangements (January to February half-term):

It has always been our intention to increase contact time as soon as we could and then return to a normal school day as soon as possible after that. We are still unable to return to a normal school day for a number of reasons, including the complications surrounding an extended lunch break given current COVID restrictions.

We also wish to maintain the additional catch up sessions for Year 11 and Year 13 students that are taking place after school on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. These additional sessions are proving invaluable in helping students prepare for their future exams and, just as importantly, develop their confidence as we move through this critical year for them. I think it is important to point out, such additional support sessions will be extended to all other year groups as we progress through the year and in future years. However, it is important, in the first instance, that we prioritise Year 11 and Year 13 given the closeness of their examinations.

The timetable still has to factor in a closed gate policy during break times while maintaining social distancing between year group bubbles. As a consequence, we will be keeping the two 20 minute breaks. Therefore, we will continue with a form of continental day but will increase lesson time by 5 minutes per lesson.

We will continue with the staggered start to the school day with year groups entering the school site through their different year group gates.

Year groups will remain in the same blocks/bubbles as they have been this half term.

**The new timetable structure** is highlighted in the table below:

<u>Tutorial</u>	
Year 11	8.40am
Year 9	8.45am
Year 10	8.50 am
Lesson 1	9.00am – 9.55am
Lesson 2	9.55am – 10.50am
Break	10.50am – 11.10am
Lesson 3	11.10am – 12.05pm
Lesson 4	12.05pm – 1.00pm
Break	1.00pm – 1.20pm
Lesson 5	1.20pm – 2.15pm

### Catch Up sessions:

Every Tuesday from 1.10pm – Year 11 English, Maths and Science additional lessons.

Every Wednesday from 2.25pm – Year 11 Option Subjects additional lessons on a carousel basis.

Every Wednesday from 2.40pm – Year 13 additional lessons on a carousel basis.

Every Thursday from 2.25pm – Year 11 Option Subjects additional lessons on a carousel basis.

Every Thursday from 2.40pm – Year 13 additional lessons on a carousel basis.

### Sixth Form Tutorials will take place:

Year 12 Every Thursday 2.15pm to 2.45 pm

Year 13 Every Wednesday and Thursday 2.15pm to 2.35pm

### Christmas Holiday Period

The school closes for the Christmas holiday on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 after period 5 at 2.00pm. Students return to school on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to start the new timetable structure described above.

### Calendar 2021/22

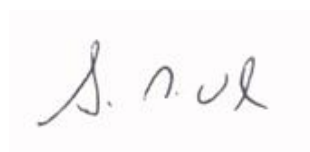
A few parents have contacted the school asking about the start date for the academic year 2021/22. Therefore, attached with this letter is the next academic year's term dates to help you with your future planning. The start date for students will be Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.

## Conclusion

There are many reasons to be optimistic as we approach the New Year. I hope, with the potential roll out of COVID-19 vaccines, we can return to a normal school day as soon as possible and students can start to experience, once again, all the additionality that this school offers.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



**STEVE WILSON**  
Headteacher

Encl.