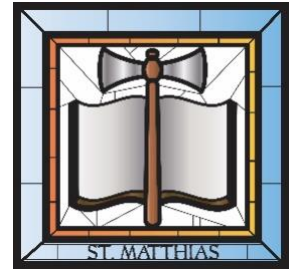


Monday 23rd August 2021

Dear Year 9 Parents

We are looking forward to the start of a new academic year.

We all know the last two years have been full of disruption so aim is to do whatever we can to help your child catch up. We want everyone to be happy, safe and successful. Making all three of these things happen is going to require help from everyone.



Staying safe is a more complicated thing than ever before. When it comes to Covid 19 we are following the advice of our government and consult with Public Health England locally and nationally. We are pleased to report that our incidents of infection have been low. We have had very good lines of communication with parents and our children have been fantastic. Together we have worked through very difficult and anxious times.

I think all of us are hopeful that something like normal is returning. I suspect that there will be few more bumps in a long road before we see whatever normal was again. My immediate concern is for your children's health and then the health of you and your families and the adults in school.

Whatever your opinion on hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing the most emotional responses seem to be around the wearing of a mask. I for one don't much like masks but I have worn and do wear one most days when I'm out and about in crowded places. Some people have a strong view against wearing a mask, so be it. I'm not interested in having a debate about all of that.

I have recommended to my staff that they wear masks in school wherever they can. Also, to try to think about their distance. I have asked my staff to let me know if anyone in their family has Covid 19 and whilst they can come into work if fully vaccinated I might ask them to work from home as a precaution. I don't want anyone in our school to be put at an increased risk when there might be something simple and easy we can do to avoid it.

The recommendations I have made to my staff I therefore make to you. Wearing a mask in school is not a requirement but if your child would like to wear one at certain times they can. We can provide one if they wanted one. No one will be made to feel uncomfortable if they choose not to wear a mask it is just a precaution, a sensible one I think. I'd also appreciate it if all parents could keep an eye on symptoms and let us know if someone in the family has Covid 19. The guidance now says that children do not need to isolate unless they have Covid 19. That is good news for reducing the disruption to learning but could aid infection rates in a school environment. What I am hoping for is where there is a potential for risk that we have a sensible conversation and agree something in the best interests of everyone.

We start the term with two lateral flow tests in line with government expectations. Below is the date and time that your child will need to come into school for their first test. They will just come in for the test and then return home.

Year 9 Test one – Wednesday 8th September 2021

By next week, a text will be sent to you with the exact test time and these will also be shared on our website. The second test will be completed in school once your child has returned to school.

Your child will return to school on **Thursday 9th September 2021** and needs to arrive no later than 9.00am.

If you need any new uniform items, these can be purchased on the days that your child comes in for their first lateral flow test. We are expecting all students to be in full smart uniform with all the necessary equipment. Uniform and equipment guidelines can be found on our website.

To start with the only school food available will be at lunchtime and to children entitled to free school meals. It will be delivered to tutor rooms where all children will eat before going to their designated areas in the building or outside for lunch break. There will be no breakfast food or break time food. It is therefore really important that every child has water and a break time snack. We have plans to change this as soon as we can.

Children who do not receive a free school meal will need a packed lunch. Having a packed lunch with real food everyday means being prepared. If you give your child money to buy something on the way to school at the shop we will be checking that it is proper food.

I look forward to the happy, safe and successful year we all need.

Best wishes.

Dean Coombes

Head Teacher