

Friday 7th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

The summer term is now well underway and pupils have settled back into the routines to which we have all become accustomed. Our Year 11 pupils, and Year 10 pupils in English Literature, have been working hard to prepare for their assessments as part of the evidence we will use for their final Centre Assessed Grades. We have also seen the return of extra-curricular activities, it has been so refreshing to see pupils playing sports as part of the Oakwood Olympics, singing, playing instruments or attending other activities right across the school. It is very often these experiences that pupils not only look forward to, but also remember fondly, long after they have left school.

It is clear that rates of COVID are falling both nationally and locally and we will soon be moving into Phase 3 of the 'Road Map' on 17th May. At this stage I am unsure of what implications this will have for our infection control measures in school, but once I have this information I will share it with you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support with testing and ensuring pupils are equipped with face masks for the school day. So far, this term we have had no confirmed cases of COVID in school and only two false positives from the home tests.

I am now looking forward to September. Despite the significant decline in the virus, it is evident that there is still a risk of spikes in the future, particularly through the winter months. As a result, it is important we plan so that there is minimum disruption for pupils and their learning. As a result, we will retain some of the changes we have implemented this year around the start and end of the school day, lunchtime and tutor groups. These will allow us to continue working as normal, should we be required to keep pupils in year group bubbles.

At the start of the day, pupils will be still designated separate meeting points, these are in year groups and this allows for an orderly start from 8.30am. Pupils will continue to be in year group tutor groups, with two groups per House. The lunch period will continue to be split; pupils will have a 20-minute break in the dining room and 20 minutes outside, where they will also be able to access food. Finally, we will continue to stagger the end of the school day, although there will be a slight change here, with Year 7 finishing at 2.35pm, Years 8 and 9 at 2.40pm and Years 10 and 11 at 2.45pm.

Keeping young people safe online is a high priority for us as a school. Nationally research suggests that, in the last year, "self-generated" child sexual abuse imagery has increased by 77% and is a third of all child sexual abuse material identified and removed from the internet. These included images of girls aged 11 to 13 whose abuse had been recorded via a webcam in a domestic setting. To help prevent the creation of this type of abusive imagery, a national campaign has been launched by the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) backed by the Home Office and Microsoft. It aims to help raise awareness of this type of criminality

A member of the Inspire Trust

among parents and carers of young teens, empower and educate girls aged 11 to 13+ to spot the techniques used by sexual predators and give them the knowledge to 'Block, Report, and Tell' someone they trust.

This national campaign will run up to 6th June. You can find out more on the [IWF](#) website, as well as specific sites for [parents](#) and [young people](#).

On the theme of online safety, I would like to ask for your help. Lately the pastoral team have had to spend an increased amount of time looking into friendship issues or hurtful comments to others. The main source of these issues has been social media, in particular Snapchat. As you will be aware, this platform allows users the chance to engage in "group stories" and it is here that conversations can turn ugly. Users can post photos and text which disappears in a matter of seconds and when used wrongly, there is no evidence of the conversations for parents to check. Please could I ask that you speak to your child about showing kindness to others and using one of the 5Rs: Respect. This topic was raised in my assemblies to all year groups during the first week back after Easter. You can find a parent's guide [here](#).

During the last year, many families have faced increasing hardship. Rotherham Council has been helping members of the community with energy queries for eight weeks now. In these uncertain times, the council can now offer energy support to those most at risk from fuel poverty. A significant number of parents with children on free school meals, and those who received extra support, have come forward and shown interest in this support.

Through the new scheme, Rotherham residents can:

- get help in applying for energy support payments/home improvement grants such as the government's Eco-3 scheme;
- save significantly through support in switching home energy suppliers- on average last year, UK residents found they wasted £150 by overpaying for energy bills when they could have switched suppliers;
- receive support in understanding their gas/electric bills and with any other energy related problems.

If you think you would benefit from the support they can offer, then please contact their Community Energy Officer:

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/energy-climate-change/community-energy-rotherham/1>

Governor Recruitment

Our Local Governing Body plays an important role in supporting and challenging the school leadership team and holding them accountable on behalf of our pupils, families and the wider community. It is important we have an active body that is representative of our community. There are a number of vacancies for parent governors at this time. If you are interested or would like to know more information please contact clerk@inspiretrust.uk

Eid Celebrations

Finally, we recognise that over the past number of weeks many of our community have been observing Ramadan. The festival of Eid is likely to fall on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday next week. Although it is not a national holiday, as a school we recognise the importance of this time to members of our community. As such, and as we have done in previous years, we will allow children to take one day to observe Eid. Please contact the school on the day your child is absent for this to be authorised.

Earlier this week I wrote to the families of Year 11 pupils who were scheduled to have English and Physics assessments during this period. In light of the confirmation that Eid celebrations will fall on these days, and because these assessments involve all pupils in Year 11, we have rescheduled them to the following week. This is to make sure all pupils have the opportunity to sit these assessments at the same time, in order to provide consistency.

In a normal GCSE year this would not be possible, but as we all know, this is not a normal year and we feel making this adjustment will support families and pupils during this week. There have been some assessments that, due to their nature, we have not been able to move. The small number of pupils who are celebrating Eid when these exams are on, will be expected to attend for the part of the day that these are scheduled.

I would like to take this opportunity once again for the ongoing support you provide the school and to say to all our families celebrating Eid next week, 'Eid Mubarak'.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Eccles - Head of School

Letter translation is available.

Ak potrebujete pomoc s prekladom, kludne mi napíšte email a ja vám zavolám pri prvej vhodnej príležitosti. Moja emailová adresa je h.vereczy@oakwood.ac

اگر آپ کو اس خط کا اردو ترجمہ چاہیے تو براہ کرم اوپر دیئے گئے نمبر پر رابطہ کریں۔ شکریہ
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