

Friday 17th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

We have now completed two very successful weeks since our return after the summer break. Our pupils have settled into the routine and rhythm of school life and are working hard to meet and maintain our high expectations of them.

As a society we are now living with the COVID virus and the ongoing use of twice weekly testing in schools for staff and pupils is an important measure to reduce the in school and community spread. In addition, mass adult vaccination over the last 12 months has helped reduce serious and terminal illness. This week the governments of all the home nations and endorsed by the Chief Medical Officers, approved the use of a single dose vaccination programme in schools. I appreciate this has been met with divided opinion, however as we have done throughout the pandemic, we will follow the guidance given to us. As yet we do not have a date for vaccinations to be delivered at Oakwood. Once we do, we will inform parents and pupils and seek consent for them to be administered. Having the vaccine is a personal choice and when the time comes we will respect the wishes of the individual.

The cases in Rotherham are still very high. Since our return to school we have had a number of confirmed cases. Under the new guidance to schools issued at the start of September, we are no longer required to carry out close contact tracing, as this was placing significant burden on school resources and detracting from our core business of education. However, in the current climate, I appreciate that people are apprehensive and also want to be notified if they have been potentially exposed to the virus, in order to take precautions and take an appropriate test if necessary. As a result, we will notify parents of a specific year group if a child in that year group returns a positive PCR test result. Track and Trace will notify close contacts, however, we hope that by informing you of a potential close contact you can keep a close eye on your child and monitor them for any or the main symptoms:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal;
- aching joints and feeling tired/ lethargic.

In the case that they are feeling unwell, it will allow you to act quickly and take them for a PCR test. We also continue to strongly recommend all pupils continue to test twice a week at home, even if they do not have any symptoms.

Since March 2020, pupils' education has experienced significant disruption, with two long periods of lockdown and for the vast majority of pupils, a number of periods of isolation. As a school and as individuals we have shown both our resilience and resourcefulness during this time. However, it has had an impact on school attendance and, as the evidence strongly suggests, there is no substitute for good attendance at school and learning in the classroom. As a result, I was delighted last week with the overall school attendance which on one single day was at 97.8% and this was against a backdrop of a rising number of

cases in the community and across our region. I would like to thank parents for supporting your child's return to school and contributing to our very positive start.

## **Chromebooks**

This week we have been distributing Chromebooks to all our Year 7 pupils. As a consequence, all pupils at Oakwood now have access to a personal device and to the Google suite. This is a significant investment by the school, we do this to ensure no child is placed at a disadvantage and has the opportunity to access online learning resources both in school and at home. We expect our pupils to respect their devices and take responsibility for keeping them charged and bringing them in everyday. Over the last 18 months they have proved invaluable in supporting 'blended learning' and, as a consequence, our ability to now optimise their use in the classroom has also increased. In many lessons, even if they don't rely on the use of technology, pupils will find a productive use for their device. Please support us to support your child by ensuring they bring it with them fully charged every day.

## **Uniform and Equipment Reminders**

We have placed a big emphasis on our return to school on meeting uniform expectations. On the whole, our pupils wear their uniform with pride and correctly. When they are in the school building after 8.30am they need to be wearing their blazers around the building, with their shirts tucked in and ties on. No jackets, sweatshirts or hoodies (including PE hoodies) are allowed. In addition, pupils are required to wear full length black trousers and black skirts worn no shorter than knee length unless with thick black tights/black leggings, as this is a professional working environment. All items must be plain black with no noticeable buckles, rivets, zips, studs, logos or badges. Tracksuit type trousers or jeans cannot be worn. Plain black leggings may be worn only with an appropriate skirt.

Our jewellery policy is also very straightforward. Pupils should have no jewellery except for watches and plain studs. Only school sanctioned badges are to be worn with the school uniform e.g. School Council, Prefect etc. If your child has piercings, only one set of earrings (studs not hooped or dangling) and one nose stud is allowed. Once again can I ask parents to support us with this and check your child is not leaving home wearing the wrong type or too much jewellery.

Overall we have been very pleased with how well our pupils have presented themselves and strive to be 'Oakstanding' by meeting these expectations and we continue to ask for your support with this. As always if you have any queries or require any support please do not hesitate to contact your child's PLT.

## **School Reception Car Park and Lawton Lane**

As the days become shorter our first priority is always pupil safety. As was the procedure in previous, there is to be **no parental access** onto Lawton Lane and the school parking area outside the **main reception** before or after school. As the pupil entrance is on Moorgate Road, parents and carers should either drop their children off in the parking bays along Moorgate Road or in the nearby side roads and encourage your child to walk a short distance to school. Can I ask that parents park safely and legally on Moorgate Road and don't use the neighbouring car park at NHS Moorside. Please drop your child/children away from the school crossing as this could cause an accident. All pupils should use the crossing, where appropriate. From time to time Traffic Enforcement officers make inspection visits and will issue on-the-spot fines to motorists for parking violations.

For safety reasons, all vehicles, other than staff vehicles, will be prevented from driving up Lawton Lane from **Monday 20th September**. Only in exceptional circumstances will a parental pass be issued. If you do require access to the Main entrance for your child due to a medical reason, please contact your child's Head of House.

We need the start and end of the day to be as smoothly and safely as possible and ask for your help with this.

## **Key parental events 2021-2022**

This term we will be holding our Tutor Review day and, all being well, this will take place in the school building. We are so looking forward to meeting our parents in this way. This is a fantastic opportunity for teachers and pupils to share with parents the progress they have made and set targets. The booking sheet for this has opened today and can be accessed via the website or by following this link:

<https://oakwoodhighschool.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Following the success and feedback from the virtual parents evenings last year, we will continue to hold our subject events online. This will hopefully allow you greater opportunity to attend and fit around busy work and home life schedules. More details of how to book for both the tutor review day and parents evening will follow shortly.

Date/Time	Event
Monday 20th Sept 2021, 4.00pm-6.00pm	Y5/Y6 Open Evening
Wednesday 20th October 2021, 11am-7pm	Tutor Review Day (Face to Face), All year groups
Tuesday 23rd November 2021, 4pm-7pm	Y8 & Y11 Virtual Parents Evening
Wednesday 1st December 2021, 4pm-7pm	Y7, Y9 & Y10 Virtual Parents Evening
Wednesday 30th March 2022, 4pm-7pm	Y8 & Y11 Virtual Parents Evening
Tuesday 26th April 2022, 4pm-7pm	Y7, Y9 & Y10 Virtual Parents Evening

### Learning, teaching and other opportunities

We now strive to build on this positive start to the school year. After each of the lockdowns in the last 18 months we have aimed to support pupils back to school through our 'recovery plan' based around rebuilding positive relationships, establishing routines, re-engaging pupils in face-to-face learning and resetting the curriculum. This year our focus is on the quality of teaching and learning, through challenging questioning, effective assessment and extensive opportunities to recap and reload prior learning. Alongside this we aim to provide those wider opportunities through our extra curricular provision that we have sorely missed and that is so important to help pupils' wider development. A list of the opportunities available can be found here: [Extra Curricular Programme September 2021](#)

Once again, thank you for your ongoing support and helping us make Oakwood High School an integral part of our community.

Yours faithfully

**Chris Eccles - Headteacher**

If you need some help with a translation of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ak potrebujete pomoc s prekladom, kľudne mi napíšte email a ja vám zavolám pri prvej vhodnej príležitosti. Moja emailová adresa je [h.vereczy@oakwood.ac](mailto:h.vereczy@oakwood.ac)

s.khan@oakwood.ac اگر آپ کو اس خط کا اردو ترجمہ چاہیے تو براہ کرم اوپر دیئے گئے نمبر پر رابطہ کریں۔ شکریہ