

24th November 2020

Dear Parent and Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well. We are now just over two weeks into the second national 'lockdown' and I know that you will be as hopeful as me that it has the desired effect in reducing the spread of Covid-19 and enables us all to look forward to a more normal future. The exciting news about potential vaccines is certainly something to be hopeful about and it has been really interesting to hear the students talking about this and showing a good level of understanding about the stages of development, testing and potential roll out. There are learning opportunities everywhere! In the meantime, I would like to share some information which I hope you find useful:

Vice Principal Appointment

Yesterday we were very busy with interviews for the position of Vice Principal to replace Jen Warr at the start of the Summer Term 2021. We were delighted to have had a large number of applicants for this position and the quality of the four candidates we interviewed was very strong indeed. I am pleased to be able to inform you that we have appointed Philip Midworth who is currently Headteacher at The Dorchester Learning Centre.

Teaching Assistant Appointments

We were also successful in making some excellent appointments to our Teaching Assistant team and are delighted to welcome Tabitha Baker (Teaching Assistant) and Gareth Roberts (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) who will join us in January 2021.

Buildings

I just wanted to update you about some planned building works that had been postponed due to the knock on implications of Covid-19 restrictions. There are several effects that the national situation has created including restrictions on non-essential works, limited availability of materials and an overall increase in the costs of some projects. Despite this, work is still planned for the following projects:

- **Clare Tower:** we are planning to undertake improvements to the exterior of the building. Those of you who have been in the building will know it is an awful lot nicer inside than it looks from the road.
- **6th Form Centre:** plans are being finalised with surveyors for a front extension to the Centre on two levels and to include internal alterations and improvements.
- **New Safeguarding Fence:** the new fence to secure the front of the site has been ordered and needs to be erected during a holiday period. We are hopeful that this will be carried out during February Half Term 2021.

Calendar reminders

The calendar was published at the start of the year and is available on our website. However, there have been some requests for reminders about key events. To respond to this, our Main Office will send a very short bulletin via InTouch on a Thursday afternoon alerting you to any significant events taking place the following week e.g. a Parents Evening or an INSET Day.

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INSET Days

We are often asked about these days, so I thought a reminder might be helpful. All schools are required to have five non student days that are used for staff training. When I was at school these were called 'Baker Days', named after the Education Secretary who introduced them. We now call them INSET Days (In Service Education Training). Most schools tend to have more of these days in the first term so there is longer in the year to follow up with further training. It is also in this longer term with dark evenings that students feel more benefit from their day off. In the case of November they benefit from two longer weekends in close succession. Here are the dates of the five 2020/21 INSET Days:

- *Thursday 3rd September 2020*
- *Friday 2nd October*
- *Friday 20th November*
- *Monday 30th November*
- *Friday 25th June 2021*

Parents' Evenings

For our upcoming Parents' Evenings we have enabled the video conference facility to the online booking system we introduced during the last academic year. This means that the School Cloud Booking System you used last year will enable you to also meet with your child's teachers virtually. A letter will be sent to Year 9 parents and carers later this week with details of how you can make your appointments and meet with your child's teachers.

We held our first non 'face to face' Parents Evening via telephone calls last week for Year 13. Thank you to all the staff, parents and students who were involved in this.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert