

13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parent and Carer

Please can I thank you and the students for supporting the new rules we have had to implement since the start of the second 'lockdown'. This is a difficult time for our students and, on the whole, they have been very good at remembering to bring in their face covering and to wear it during periods of mass movement indoors. We have a limited supply of spares and we would urge them to check they have theirs before they leave for school.

We are very pleased that, after seeking further clarification on the new guidance for schools, we are able to carry on providing extracurricular clubs after school. If they offer an opportunity to learn new skills and support childcare, then they are permitted. We believe that they do both of these things. It is a concern to me that the cessation of clubs, sports, services and social time outside of school will have an impact upon student wellbeing.

In order to further support our Year 7 and Year 8 students, we have introduced an in-class break to their afternoon lessons. This is an opportunity for them to relax and engage with their peers and teachers outside of normal learning. We look forward to a time when we can return to a more normal school day, with one lesson after lunch.

We are also keen to support our local community and have been talking to local shops about students' visits before and after school. Some concern has been expressed that students visiting in groups to buy sweets are making it more challenging to enable a safe social distancing environment for older customers, who are there for what is essential shopping. In particular, we have agreed to support the Co-op by discouraging our students from going into the store for anything other than essential shopping.

We also want to support local residents. Unfortunately, in recent weeks, large numbers of students have been arriving far too early and congregating in front of the houses in Everdene Mews, where the presence of large groups is understandably not welcome. Please remember that if students need to arrive early, we are able to accommodate them in the Resources Centre, as part of our wraparound care. There are also spaces after school as well. In relation to arrival, no students should be waiting outside the school gates:

- Year 10 students (start time 8.25am) should not wait by the gates but come onto the site and wait at the main playground area.
- Year 9 (start time 8.40am) have been allocated a playground area (between The Hub and the 6th Form Centre) so likewise they should be encouraged to wait there if they are early, not outside the school gates.
- Year 8 (start time 8.55am) must not wait outside Everdene Gate. We are now instructing those that arrive before 8.35am to go inside Everdene Hall and await the start of lessons. If they arrive after 8.35am they can enter the site and wait at their normal line-up point in front of The Hub.
- Year 7 (start time 9am) should come down into the main playground area and wait there for school to start.

As you know, we have to manage our year groups in 'bubbles'. As an extra step to keep students and staff safe in narrower parts of the school, we will be introducing a split corridor system to ensure that students do not accidentally block corridors during transition, thereby ensuring less congestion at these changeover times. The simple message of travelling on the left will be supported by some floor markings.

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I would like to thank you for your support, it is heart-warming to hear how closely staff and parents have been working together to support the students. Children are facing unprecedented challenges and uncertainties and we are fully aware of the growing number of issues, particularly regarding the mental health of many of our young people. It is sometimes easy to take for granted just how many significant changes nine months have brought to us all. We know that under the new rules, we have students who are greatly missing the company of relatives and friends as they are unable to see them.

Please contact us if there is any further support we can offer. We have invested heavily in a new Student Support Centre here at Budmouth which is proving invaluable in supporting our students at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Mike Hoffmann  
Associate Principal