

1st April 2021

Dear Parent and Carer

As we approach the end of the Spring Term, it does feel strange that we have now passed the one year mark from the first full national lockdown. I know that many of our students are feeling quite excited about some of the upcoming relaxation of restrictions. This week we have been able to welcome back outside sports' clubs bookings to our site at the weekend and evenings. I hope that you all enjoy a lovely Easter Holiday period and that the weather will enable everyone to make the most of the new outdoor opportunities; including the opportunity to meet friends and family in outdoor and garden spaces (within the guidelines).

End of Mass Testing

It is good to have finished the mass testing of students who undertook the three lateral flow tests. As you will be aware, these are now available for students to complete at home, if they choose to do so. It is also the case that other household members are now able to access these tests from local centres. Although Covid-19 infection rates are very low in our area, this wider scale access to tests does mean that we are still likely to discover some isolated positive cases that may cause some disruption if either individual members of staff, or students are requested to isolate. Thank you for your patience and support with this.

Year 11 and 13 Leaving Days

Year 11 and 13 students have come back to school and are working very hard to secure positive results. We have been liaising with local schools to ensure that there is some consistency concerning the date they will be allowed to finish their studies or 'Leavers' Day'. These dates have now been confirmed as:

- Year 13: Thursday 27th May.
- Year 11: Friday 28th May (last day of the half term).

Our staff will be moderating grades in the first two weeks after half term and these have to be submitted to exam boards by Friday 18th June. If there are any students who have had issues accessing school due to Covid restrictions e.g. enforced self-isolation and have experienced disruption to their learning and assessment, then these remaining weeks remain open for us to gather further information from them and they might be invited to attend school during that time. Mr Hudson and Mr Henman have written separately to Year 11 and Year 13 regarding this and other matters. I am sure we would all like to wish these students every success for their final half term.

Provisional Summer Prom Bookings

I must stress that these events are provisional, of course, and completely dependent on the national decisions that are made concerning the guidance restrictions. However, in the hope that we will be able to offer our students their 'rite of passage' leaving events, we have secured the following bookings at The Sailing Academy. You will note we are trying to provide an opportunity for students who didn't get their chance last year. Letters with further details will be sent to the relevant students and we will keep everything crossed that they get to enjoy their events:

- Last years' Year 11 (Class of 2020): Thursday 1st July
- Current Year 11 (Class of 2021): Friday 2nd July
- Year 13 2021 (including Year 13 2020): Thursday 24th June.

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Staff Leaving at Easter

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of staff who are leaving us at Easter. Mrs Graves is moving out of the area to live nearer to her family in Bournemouth. She has been at Budmouth since 2005 and has led the English Department since September 2019. I would like to thank her for her commitment to Budmouth during that time. We will also miss her enthusiasm with the annual staff pantomime! Congratulations to our very own Mrs England who was successful in her appointment to the Subject Co-ordinator post and will be taking up her new responsibility after Easter.

Our thanks also go to Mrs Warr. As already announced she will be leaving at the end of term to take up her new post leading the secondary phase of the new Livingstone Academy in Bournemouth which will open in September 2021. She has made a great impact in a short space of time and was instrumental in helping take our attendance levels from being well below national average to now being slightly above. We wish her well in her new role. Mr Midworth will take up the post of Vice Principal after Easter. He is currently Headteacher of the Dorchester Learning Centre and is saying goodbye to his students and staff this week.

Cancelled INSET (non-student day) Day - Friday 25th June

Due to the amount of time that students have lost in school this year, all of the schools in our Trust have cancelled what would have been a non-student day, to prioritise them being in school. I am sure they will be pleased!

Operation Encompass

We have been given the opportunity to take part in a project that will run jointly between schools and Dorset Police. Operation Encompass is the notification to schools when a child or young person has experienced any domestic abuse, this information will be shared with schools. Operation Encompass will ensure that senior safeguarding members of the school staff, known as key adults, are trained to allow them to receive information from the Police and to use the information shared in confidence, whilst ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children or their families, who have been involved in a domestic abuse incident.

2021/22 School Day Timings

We have had an excellent response from parents and staff to the consultation survey. The feedback from both of these groups was very similar. The students have been given until the end of this week to complete theirs and we will confirm any changes for 2021/22 after the Easter holiday. A reminder that the term dates for next year can be found on our website.

Uniform

Some of our students have returned from the 'lockdown' having experienced some issues with shoes, skirts and trousers that are no longer the right size. Staff are communicating with parents to ensure that the right uniform is being worn. Some tolerance and leeway has been given in recent weeks as we accept that access to shops and stock has been more difficult in recent times. However, moving forward and as retail shops open soon, we do expect the full uniform to be worn and for our students to look smart. Two weeks ago an InTouch message was sent to all parents about some incorrect blazers that were sent to families by Brigade. Some had no blue piping and some had too much blue piping! A reminder that if you were affected, Brigade will supply a free replacement. Please contact Mrs Reed (Director of Business and Support Services) if this affects you: creed@budmouth-aspirations.org.

Safety helmets

The better weather has seen an increasing number of students choosing to cycle or use their scooter to come to school. I would like to remind you that students need to wear an appropriate safety helmet. We have areas where students can safely lock their bikes and scooters. As we have a duty of care to our students, we will not permit them to bring their bikes and scooters to school if they do not wear an appropriate helmet. A reminder also that skateboards are not allowed to be brought to school.

Government guidance

At the time of writing, we have not received any changes to government guidance with respect to the management of Covid-19 in schools, including the current recommendation that students wear face coverings when they are in indoor areas. As things stand, the working practices at the start of the Summer Term will, therefore, remain the same unless further guidance is provided.

Due to well ventilated classrooms, students have been able to wear outside garments inside e.g. coats. However, with the warmer weather coming, this will not be necessary unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please note that students do not need to wear their school jumper in the Summer Term, however, they may choose to do so if they wish.

New Year 7 Intake 2021

I am delighted that we will be welcoming another full year group in September. I am writing to our new students/parents and carers to outline the new transition process and we all hope that the guidance will enable more contact with them than was permitted last year. Their Induction Day is scheduled for Tuesday 6th July. Members of SLT will be conducting video meetings with each student and their parents/carers during the course of the next half term and we hope to be able to hold an 'on site' meeting for parents in the week beginning Monday 28th June; but this will depend on the restrictions that are in place at the time.

Thank you for your continued support and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Easter.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Herbert', is written below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

David Herbert