

7<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your family are safe and well. Further to my letter before the summer break, as we prepare to welcome back all pupils at the start of the autumn term, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you and reiterate key messages about the return to school.

### COVID-19 Update

We have had a good start to term, and thank you for your support in enabling testing.

As you will be aware cases of COVID-19 continue to occur in our community, and this is reflected in the national figures we see each day.

Over the summer the government changed the expectations of schools around COVID-19 and therefore in the event of a positive case it is now NHS Test and Trace who identify and make contact with any close contacts. If you or your child is contacted then they will encourage you to have a PCR test and if you meet the following then you no longer need to self-isolate as of the 16<sup>th</sup> August.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

We will not be contacting parents directly in the event of positive cases, however we may reintroduce measures if needed based on the number of pupils who have tested positive. This for example may include reintroducing face coverings, use of bubbles, social distancing or remote learning.

To reduce the possibility of the Covid restrictions and to ensure the schools stay open policy, I would like to remind you of the key messages we expect of pupils:



Please do not hesitate to contact school if you have any queries.

As we continue to navigate the pandemic and respond to local and national guidance, we will keep you informed and updated on any changes to our measures as soon as possible.

Please find on the next pages important information regarding returning back to school.

As always, I am grateful for all the support you give to the school.

Yours sincerely



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Principal

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## **Pupils cycling to school**

All pupils bringing their bicycles to school should arrive at their nominated gate and must have a permit, which can be obtained Reception.

## **Attendance**

As always, we would like to emphasise our expectations for outstanding attendance; any pupils missing the first day or week back will be missing vital education and information. If pupils are in correct uniform, on time and equipped, they are demonstrating their determination to succeed. This eliminates the need for sanctions and allows us to focus on learning and recognising those pupils making the correct choices.

Good attendance is vital for your child to make the most of every learning opportunity to enable them to realise their greatness and as well as equipping your child for their journey through life. Missing school will make that journey much more difficult and is a waste of the valuable time and resources provided for your child's education. We take great pride in our high levels of pupil attendance and we expect every child to achieve at least 96% attendance.

The DFE informs us:

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education.

The school employs a full-time member of staff who is responsible for supporting and challenging attendance concerns and will liaise with, and help, pupils, and parents where issues arise. Please support us by ensuring your child attends school.

Attendance to school is compulsory and normal attendance systems apply. In the event that your child is unable to attend school for any reason you should contact us by 8.30am, providing the following details: Pupil Name, Year and Year Group, Reason for absence, Parent Name and a contact number. Please contact Laura Malkin, Attendance Officer, or send a message via MyEd.

Parents should contact the school by telephone on 024 7674400 on the first day of absence.

Prior notice of absence should be given by letter/telephone/email whenever possible.

After a planned absence, when a pupil returns to school, they should return with a letter of explanation which should be completed by the parent/carer. Similarly, dental or hospital appointments need to be confirmed in the same way. Appointment cards should be shown to the Form Tutor and then to Reception, when signing out of school. **Whenever possible, all appointments should be made after school hours or during holidays.** In certain circumstances medical evidence may be requested in order for absences to be authorised.

## **Punctuality**

From September, school will start at 8.30am with a line up of 8.40am for year 7,8 and 9 and 9.10am with a line up at 9.20am for year 10 and 11. We stress the need for punctuality, both in arriving at school and arrival at lessons in school. Late arrival is recorded at the office and then entered in registers. Pupils who are late to school will receive a D2 late detention and will be required to stay behind for 30 minutes on the same day to complete the missed learning.

If lateness persists they will be given a target with a period of monitoring and a parental meeting will be requested. We are getting our pupils ready for the world of work and being organised and punctual is part of the toolkit we want to equip our pupils with.

## **Rewards**

The School Behaviour and Discipline policy emphasises a consistent approach to reward and recognition. Many of these rewards are a natural part of every lesson and create a positive, well-disciplined, supportive atmosphere. The reinforcement of positive attitudes also contributes to a school ethos of “**Be Kind and Aim for Excellence.**” The school uses our House system and a Merit and Demerit approach to encourage our pupils to meet the milestones we set them for rewards.

## **Behaviour and detentions**

I would like to bring to your attention our school policy on mobile phones. We understand that pupils bring mobile phones to school, but these are to remain in pupils bags and switched off during the school day. Pupils should not use their phone in school, at any time. If a pupil uses their phone in school without permission, the following sanctions will apply:

The phone will be confiscated, held in the school office and parents will be asked to collect **the next day**. This approach to mobile phones means our school environment is rarely disturbed by the many distractions that mobile phones bring to our young people and we thank you again to our parents who support us with this.

## **Detentions**

If a pupil is removed from lesson due to poor behaviour the school will operate the following:

Year 7,8 and 9 - a thirty minute detention on the same day where they will work on missed learning.

Year 10 and 11 - a one hour detention on the same day which will include 15 minutes of mentoring and support and forty-five minutes of an intervention with a teacher to support their progress.

## **PE Kit**

The compulsory kit is:

- A George Eliot branded Polo Shirt
- Plain black shorts/leggings/tracksuit bottoms
- A George Eliot branded hoody/fleece
- Trainers

If a pupil requires an outdoor jacket/jumper for PE it **must** be a George Eliot hoody or fleece. Nothing else will be allowed.

## **MyEd**

The school uses an App called MyEd to communicate with parents. Please visit the App store or Google Play and follow the instructions. More information can be found on [www.myedschoolapp.com](http://www.myedschoolapp.com).