

March 2021

Headlines

Dear Parent/Carer,

It seems difficult to believe that we are at the end of another term already! We are delighted to have all our students back in school and back to some kind of normality even though it is still strange times.

Mass testing

The mass testing ran extremely smoothly, thanks to our small but amazing team of staff and parent volunteers; and with the vast majority of our students and parents consenting, it has enabled us to ensure that the school is as safe as it can be. From now on, students and staff will be issued with home kits to test themselves and any positive cases will need to be confirmed by taking a follow up PCR test. Please ensure that you continue with the testing during the Easter holidays and prior to returning after the break. In addition, please also encourage your children to be sensible over Easter in terms of following the rules, so as not to increase the risk of the virus spreading.

Uniform

Thank you for doing everything you can to ensure that students look as smart as possible given the circumstances and that they wear items that are as close to our uniform requirements as possible. After Easter, we will expect students to be wearing their full school uniform again so if there are likely to be any issues with this, please contact your child's form tutor in the first instance. If you do have any uniform in reasonable condition that does not fit your child anymore, we would be very grateful to receive your donations, whether they be branded items such as blazers, ties and PE tops, or PE shorts, trousers and shirts, etc. that could be recycled.

Please also ensure that your child does not do anything over the holidays which is against our uniform policy and cannot be rectified by the first day of term, for example, in terms of hair colour or cut, false nails, eyelashes or piercings. Please see the website for information about what is deemed to be acceptable.

Home Learning policy

We are going to be amending our current behaviour policy with regard to the non-completion of Home Learning. Home Learning is an essential tool used by a school to build a student's ability to work independently as well as allowing additional time for the recall and retrieval of key knowledge, which will support them moving forward. To further highlight the importance and value we place upon the completion of Home Learning by our student community we are introducing some key changes which will be in place after Easter.

Currently, if a student fails to provide Home Learning and without good reason, they are placed into a 30-minute detention and continue to have it re-set until the work is completed. We communicate this via the link book but are aware that parents do not always see the information.

The new policy will continue to set a 30-minute detention for the non-presentation of Home Learning and be extended to a 60-minute detention thereafter until the work is complete. A teacher will check before setting the central detention if there is any valid reason for the non-completion of the work and support where necessary. It would be helpful if parents could use the link book to record valid reasons

for the lack of Home Learning as without a note it will be difficult for a teacher not to assume that the Home Learning deadline was failed and so a detention would be set.

Communication as to whether a detention has been set will be via school comms and the student Link Book. Communication for both the 30 minute and 60-minute detention will be made.

By amending the current policy and lengthening the second detention the aim is to guide our students into more efficient working methods, allowing them the opportunity to time manage their workload and build subject mastery throughout their time at The Dorcan Academy.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Holiday programmes and Winter Grant funding

We are pleased to have received confirmation that the Winter Grant Funding has been further extended to cover the Easter holiday period. A £30 voucher will be allocated to all students in receipt of free school meals to cover the two-week period.

In addition, parents are now able to apply for a place as part of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) via; https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20029/people_and_communities/1178/covid-19_holiday_activities_and_food_programme.

The programme allows all children eligible for means-tested free school meals to access free 4-hour holiday club sessions, across 4 days of the Easter holidays. Providers have been asked to focus on physical activities and all children will be provided with a meal as part of each session.

For Easter, Swindon Borough Council are focusing on already established, Ofsted registered holiday club providers in Swindon to deliver these places. However, the programme then extends across 4 weeks of summer and again a week at Christmas and they will be working with a range of providers, e.g. sports clubs, to bring them on board in time for summer to extend the range of providers available to families.

Please do sign up for a place if you are eligible. If you would like any support in applying for a place, or wish to have some more information about the scheme you can contact EY&Cbrokerage@swindon.gov.uk.

Prom

Parents and students have understandably started to ask about the Prom and whether it will be happening this year, however at the moment, we still do not know. We do have a provisional booking in the diary; however, it is not yet clear whether the venue is going to be allowed to open therefore I don't advise spending any money on purchasing prom outfits and booking transport etc. until we are certain. We are planning to organise an event in school to enable us to say a proper goodbye to our Year 11 and to recognise all their achievements over the past 5 years, which may be in addition to, or instead of the Prom depending on what decisions are made regarding the lockdown recovery plan.

In terms of the Year 11 leaving date, we are planning for Year 11 to remain with us up to the May half term, with the last day being 28 May 2021, however, this could be subject to change if the government decide to publish an alternative national leaving date which is contrary to this.

Building works

We are pleased to announce that we have secured funding to complete the works to upgrade our heating systems. This will also provide for the removal of asbestos in the main block of the school. This work will commence at Easter, but we will have to work to a tight timescale to complete the work by the end of June. This will, unfortunately, mean that access to some areas in the main block will be restricted over the next few months, however this will not affect most of the teaching areas so should not disrupt learning and we have a clear plan to manage Health and Safety on site.

Further funding which we have also secured will mean that more improvements will be made to our premises over the next few years, and we will keep you informed about progress.

Rewards

Currently the House totals are:

- **Osprey: 46,910**
- Kingfisher: 46,647
- Falcon: 42,936
- Eagle: 37,480

Don't forget to keep earning those house points.

Finally, we wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing everyone again on Monday 19 April which is a normal school day.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham
Headteacher

