

July 2021

## Headlines - Information

Dear Parent/Carer

It is with a heavy heart that I write to you for the last time this academic year. It is so sad that the school year has ended in this way and that two of our major memorable events, our Sports day and our whole school Rewards assembly have had to be cancelled. As the new government guidance did not come into force until Monday 19 July it means that all our staff who are currently self-isolating due to being in contact with a positive case, are still required to continue to isolate, which has made staffing the school untenable. Providing remote lessons was the most effective way of ensuring that children could continue with their learning. Thank you for your letters of support and encouragement to us, it really does mean a lot.

Due to the amount of good news and information I have divided the Headlines into two parts: Good News and Information. That way you can keep the information part handy as a reminder for September.

### Uniform in September

On return from the lockdown we were conscious that students had grown out of uniform, that it was difficult to purchase replacements and that many families were struggling financially and so we temporarily relaxed our uniform requirements and have gradually been trying to get back to our usual high standards whilst realising that there is no point buying new uniform right before the summer holidays.

We will, however, be going back to our usual high expectations in September and there will be **no** concessions. If students arrive without the correct uniform, they will not be able to attend lessons until it is rectified. The only exception to this is if a medical note is received on behalf of your child which means that they are unable to wear the correct uniform; where this involves the wearing of trainers we would still expect them to be plain black. Please do not allow your child to do anything over the holidays that would mean they cannot attend lessons on the first day; i.e. false nails, nose piercings or ear-rings that are not in the ear lobe and can't be removed; hair that is coloured in an un-natural shade or that is shaved (no.1) or has tramlines. Trousers need to be tailored and not clingy or close fitting. Our uniform requirements are listed on the academy website with examples of what is and isn't allowed. Just because a shop labels the uniform as 'school uniform' does not mean that it meets our requirements. We have a reputation for being the smartest school in Swindon and I would like us to stay that way. We are due an Ofsted visit next academic year and this is something that they will notice as soon as they arrive and use to assess our standards. Thank you for your support in this.

### Changes to the behaviour policy in September

The governors have made some changes to the behaviour policy for September, the main one being that all detentions will be for one hour duration; if students incur two detentions on the same evening it will increase to an hour and a half. It was felt that students do not mind staying for 30 minutes and therefore, some would rather do this than complete their home learning or turn up on time. It also means that students in isolation will complete one hour after school making this less attractive. In addition, if students are late to lessons or do not have the correct equipment this will result in a one-hour detention; students need to learn the importance of being equipped and punctual. Equally, it will

mean that students will only be isolated from lessons if they are disrupting learning repeatedly or being disrespectful making the punishment more appropriate to the crime!

Internal exclusions are being introduced, (where the school deems it appropriate), for offences which may previously have resulted in a fixed term exclusion but where staying in school provides a more impactful sanction than going home for the day. An internal exclusion will end at 4:30pm and will, in the main be served outside the Headteacher's office. By making these changes we are aiming to reduce our fixed term exclusions and our isolations and to raise our standards even higher.

If you wish to read our behaviour policy in full it can be found on the academy website under [School Policies - The Dorcan Academy](#)

### **COVID Testing at the start of term**

I had hoped I would never see another lateral flow test in my life but alas, we are being required to test everyone twice again at the start of the new school year. We are going to be calling in all new Year 7 students and Year 11 for testing on Wednesday 1 September, Years 8 and 9 on Thursday 2 September and Year 10 on Friday 3 September. You will receive a time slot in which to arrive for testing. We will not test any student whose parent has not given consent. New Year 7 parents should have received an online consent form to complete and all other students who have consented previously will already be on record. If this is not the case, please contact us.

The second test will take place during lesson times over the course of the following few days. After this, the responsibility for lateral flow testing will pass to parents and students. Please be aware that this information could change prior to September, however, I am updating you on the current guidance.

You should have received information about the latest Track and Trace and isolation procedures for schools from 19 July 2021.

### **Staff leaving us**

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to four members of teaching staff and three members of support staff at the end of this academic year; Mr Brooks, Miss Butterworth, Ms Mould, Miss Gaston, Ms Leddy, our examinations officer, Ms Skuse, one of our Science technicians and Ms Pitts, a Teaching assistant who has been with us for 22 years. We wish them all the best as they move on to pastures new.

### **New staff for September**

We are delighted to be welcoming some fantastic new staff to the academy in September. They are: Mrs Bunter (Science), Mr Holland (Technology), Ms Marriner (Learning support teacher), Miss Booth (Maths), Mr Scott Hallam (Maths), Miss Leyland (Science), Mrs Bridge, (RE), Mr Hammonds (English), Ms Paulin (Pastoral support officer) and Ms Sittampalam (Science technician).

### **Year 7 first day reminder**

Year 7 will need to arrive in their PE kit on their first day, Friday 3 September as they will be taking part in some House team building activities and the day is so action packed that there won't be time to change. We appreciate that you will want to see them looking pristine in their uniform on the first day, and we debated long and hard, however, we want to make it fun and memorable and don't want them feeling restricted in their activities or arriving home on their first day with their lovely new uniform

looking a mess! Please view Monday 6 September as the first day for the full school uniform and be prepared to take your photos then! (which you can remind them of in Year 1!!!)

Year 7 will need to arrive at the main entrance at the front of the school on Friday where they will be directed to the basketball courts. However, on Monday (Covid rules permitting) all students will once again use the Student entrance, where they can enter and exit safely without going near the car park. Tutors will ensure that students know where to go before they end the day on Friday.

### **Emergency procedures**

During the first week back in September we will be rehearsing our fire and lockdown procedures; please do not be alarmed if students come home and tell you that they have had to hide under the tables or barricade themselves into classrooms. This is part of our safety procedures which we hope we will never need but it is best to be prepared.

We wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing Year 7 on Friday 3 September, along with our student leaders, and everyone else on Monday 6 September.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham  
Headteacher

