

21st May, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Parental Update 60

First up – a big **thank you** to everyone who’s filled in the short survey about arrangements for next year. If you haven’t yet done so, you can find the form [here](#). I’d very much appreciate any further returns by half-term if possible. I’ll report the results to you after half-term, but for now I’d like to share one comment that made me smile. “*Please can we lose the title of the newsletters?*” one parent said. “[‘Coronavirus] *update*[’] *is depressing and unnecessary! It’s a newsletter not a government broadcast!*”. On reflection, I agree, and you’ll see I’ve taken this on board already!

Thank you too if you’ve voted in the Parent Governor election. The votes will be counted early next week, and we’ll announce the result in *Parental Update 61*.

Timings of the Day, September 2021

On the subject of arrangements for next year, you may recall that last term, we consulted with you about changing the times of the school day (see *Coronavirus Update 47*). Thank you to those who responded. Comments received were fed back to the Governors, and the matter was discussed at a (virtual) meeting of the Full Governing Body earlier this week.

As a result of the discussion, the decision was taken to proceed with the plans upon which we previously consulted. This means that the start and finish times for students next year will be:

| Year-group | Start time | Finish time | Comment |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| Year 7 | 8:30am | 2:45pm | On one day each week, students in Key Stage 3 will finish 45 minutes early. We will confirm which day this is before the end of term. |
| Year 8 | 8:45am | 3:15pm | |
| Year 9 | 9:00am | 3:15pm | |
| Year 10 | 9:30am | 3:45pm | Most students will be in school for two full days and two shorter days each week. |
| Year 11 | 9:15am | 3:30pm | |
| Year 12 | 9:00am | 2:45pm | |
| Year 13 | 9:30am | 3:15pm | |

Apart from the one-day-a-week early finish for Key Stage 3 students, **these timings will be the same every day** (because we think it is generally better to spread students’ learning more evenly over the course of the week).

In the consultation, some parents fed back that ‘staggering’ the start of the school day in this way can make things difficult if students from the same family want (or need) to travel together. Regrettably we weren’t able to alleviate that situation this year. However, because the ‘stagger’ will be smaller next year, it *may* be possible to help a small number of families in this situation in September (though at this stage, I can’t make any promises) – perhaps by offering a supervised room onsite where students can complete homework *etc*. If we are able to do this, places will be prioritised (a) for families where one child has significant additional needs that affect their ability to travel independently, then (b) for families where one child is in Year 7. Again, we’ll share more about this later in the term.

I should add that these plans have been drawn up on the assumption that we won’t have any Coronavirus restrictions in place next year. If it transpires that we do, we may need to make some adjustments.

Year 8 news

I appreciate that a number of parents were unable to book appointments with all the teachers they may have wished to see at the Year 8 Parents' Evening earlier this month. Please accept my apologies if you weren't able to; we're looking to see how we can adapt the system going forward to reduce this issue. If you didn't get to speak to a teacher and haven't made alternative arrangements to get some feedback yet, please let Mr Gibbons (Head of Year 8) know, and he will help sort things out. He can be found at [this address](#).

A number of families have yet to return their Options Form. Please could I ask you to do so as soon as possible? The form can be found [here](#), and completed forms can be e-mailed to [this address](#).

Dr Silverstone's section

Dr Silverstone, our Director of Pastoral Care, writes:

"For this week's safeguarding update, I'd like to inform you about a charity called PACE - Parents Against Child Exploitation. PACE is a leading specialist charity that works alongside parents who are concerned about issues of criminal or sexual exploitation.

PACE aims to:

- *Enable parents and carers to safeguard and stop their children from being exploited.*
- *Provide evidence and specialist advice in order to demonstrate to partners that parents and carers have an essential safeguarding role.*
- *Work with parents and partners to disrupt and bring perpetrators to justice.*
- *Influence national and local policy and practice to reflect the active safeguarding role of parents and the impact on families of child exploitation.*
- *Sustain long term change by training partners in the active role of parents and carers safeguarding their children*

"PACE provide information, guidance and support workers to parents and carers who have concerns in any of these areas. Their [website](#) has a wealth of information and gives parents an opportunity to sign up for their parent newsletter and online parent forum.


"If you do have any concerns about issues of exploitation, we'd recommend you to contact PACE to access the support they can offer, or as always, feel free to contact us at [the usual address](#)".

Finally...

This Sunday, many Christians around the world will be celebrating Pentecost, "*the church's birthday*". And many of us in England will be celebrating the continuing re-opening of society following the further relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions last Monday. But if you are celebrating this weekend, please do spare a thought for those who will not (yet) be doing so. Many of our Year 11 and Year 13 students, for example, still have a number of assessments to complete; I am sure they would appreciate being held in your thoughts and prayers as they prepare for their last few before they finish on Friday.

Do enjoy your weekend (despite the weather forecast!) and we'll be in touch again next Friday.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.