

12th November, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Parental update 77

Welcome to another edition of our fortnightly *Update*. It's been another busy week at school as we've welcomed new members of staff and caught up after the inevitable disruption of last week's inspection.

But amidst the busyness it's been very important for us to take time out to remember the sacrifices of those who have given their lives in war, so that we might enjoy the peace we have today. We have remembered them; we will remember them.

Welcome

A hearty welcome to St Margaret's to two vital members of our support staff who have started with us this week.

Joanne Holmes has joined us as Principal's Personal Assistant, succeeding Angela Mcroft who retired last Friday. Joanne has extensive experience in educational administration, having previously served in a similar role at The Blue Coat School. Despite having to work closely with the Principal, she tells me she has enjoyed her first week here!

Joanne Riley also started with us on Monday as our Cleaning Supervisor – a vital job at any time, but never more so than in a pandemic. She too brings a good deal of experience to the role, and has spent the week getting to know the team and our school.

I'm sure you'd want to join me in wishing both colleagues every success in their new positions.

Parents' Evenings

In response to a couple of parental enquiries, I thought it might be worth setting out our Parents' Evening dates for the rest of the year:

Year	Date(s)	Virtual/on-site
Year 7	Tuesday 7th December 2021	Virtual
Year 8	Thursday 3rd March 2022	Virtual
Year 9	Thursday 13th January 2022	Onsite
Year 10	Thursday 28th April	Virtual
Year 11	Wednesday 24th November 2021 Wednesday 30th March 2022	Virtual Onsite
Sixth Form	Tuesday 16th February, 2022 (A Year 13 evening has already been held)	Virtual

Year 11 and Year 13 parents

You may have heard media reports this week about the Government's contingency plans covering the possibility that external exams do take place again this summer. If you'd like to read the plans, they can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). In essence, the plans involve students sitting internal 'mock' exams to help determine grades – in much the same way as happened in 2021. However I think it

is highly unlikely these plans will be implemented; after two years of cancelled exams, the powers that be will be very anxious to ensure they proceed as normally as possible this time round.

Of more significance, I expect, will be the announcement that assuming exams do take place as usual, the Exam Boards will give more information about the focus of the exam papers in some subjects – though we will have to wait till after Christmas for further details. There's a helpful BBC News article which summarises the changes [here](#).

Are you one of the 393...

...people who are following our Art Department on Instagram? (Hopefully it will be a bit more than 393 by the time you read this!). Our Art Department Instagram page shows off some of the fantastic art work our students create – you child's work may well be featured! A visit to the page is certainly worthwhile, and by following us (if you have an Instagram account) you'll be amongst the first to know about updates *etc*.

You can find the page [here](#).

Dr Silverstone writes...

“Protecting children online

“I have written a lot over recent months about the need to be mindful of what children are doing online. The Marie Collins Foundation has put together a short article which I'm sure many of you will find useful. The article answers a number of questions, such as:

- *What is online harm?*
- *How is it different from exploitation offline?*
- *How do offenders target young people online?*
- *What can parents do about it?*
- *How can they help to prevent it happening*

“It is available [here](#)”.

Reminder

As previously advertised, school will be closed on Monday 6th December. This is actually a holiday to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – the Government have given an extra Bank Holiday to mark the occasion, but since the date they've chosen falls in a half-term break, schools have been allowed to take an additional day off at another point in the school year. I'm sure our students will appreciate an extra day that weekend to rest and recharge, just as our staff will.

Finally...

We'll be in touch again in a fortnight's time – it scarcely seems possible, but that will be just before Christians celebrate Advent Sunday and the countdown to Christmas. Before we wish the year away, however, do enjoy the present too – here's to a restful weekend, whatever your plans.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.