

29 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Principal's End of Spring Term 2021 Letter

The 18th March 2020 was the date, just over a year ago, when the government informed us, we were going into a national lockdown and schools would be closed to all but those children of key workers. As a result of this, the last year has seen many changes and a different way of working or living. Schools operate in a different way still to ensure social distancing, but I cannot tell you how fantastic it is to have all the students back in classrooms engaging, working-hard and supporting each other. We are constantly reminded that the virus remains in our communities and therefore the local authority is urging parents to continue to do everything in your power to help reduce the spread of the disease as much as possible.

We are constantly reminded about how lucky we are to have each other but we are aware this year has been a strain for all of us in many ways. As we continue to ease out of this lockdown, I have no doubt we will continue to need support in many ways. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the academy, as and when this is needed, so that we are given the time and opportunity to respond to your needs.

LFT – Home testing

The testing programme at DPA was a huge success and we cannot thank staff and students for positively engaging with this process in the first few weeks of our return. As one of many preventative measures now in place it supports our efforts in school and in the wider community in reducing transmission. Everyone now has home testing kits, and these should be completed on a Sunday and Wednesday. Please remember to report your results to the NHS and academy.

Further home testing kits will be available to students from the reprographics window located in the restaurant from Tuesday 30 March. Year groups will be allocated a day and time when they can be collected eg Tuesday 30 March – Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 and Wednesday 31 March – Year 11, 12 and 13. Students will have access during their normal lunchtime to avoid bubbles coming together.

The government have asked that we encourage staff and students to continue with the testing at home and reporting the results during the Easter holidays.

Inset Day

You may recall we postponed an Inset day in March so that in returning to school we maintained as much face-to-face teaching as possible. Now that we are all back enjoying being together, we can confirm that the new date is **Thursday 13 May 2021**. Students will be at home and will be able to use Teams to access and catch up on work from previous lessons. It is also a good opportunity to revise.



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Nick Caulfield – Principal



SELF-WORTH ASPIRE SUCCESS HONESTY

Parents Evenings

Due to covid, lockdown and disruption to learning we have made the decision move the following parent evening events:

Year 7 – was Thursday 22nd April but has now moved to **Thursday 10th June 2021**

Year 9 – was Thursday 13th May but has now moved to **Thursday 1st July 2021**

This will provide more time for students and staff to be in school delivering and receiving face to face learning before meeting you as parents. We will also be conducting these events virtually to ensure we remain covid safe.

Mobile Phones

This is just a polite reminder about our policy and use of mobile phones at the academy. We encourage and will invite students to use them in lessons for learning. Therefore, there is no need to have them out at breaks, but we understand the need of bringing them in and students having access on the way to and from school. Individual students who are struggling with this will be asked to hand them in but can collect them before going home. This supports us all in many areas of staying safe.

Uniform

Massive thanks for the effort you have made to get your child into the right uniform despite the lockdown and limited access to shops. Should circumstances have changed for you and support is required with the purchase of any uniform item please do not hesitate to get in touch with the academy.

Year 11 & 13 – assessments and end of year, easter courses

We are very aware that the last year has been disrupted. This has created a situation beyond any of our control, but I know we will work together to ensure that students receive the right support and outcomes. My letter on Friday 26 March 2021 detailed how this was going to work over the coming months. Since then, further information has been released by the government. As we are all invested in doing what is right, I have no doubt that the process and journey we take will provide many of you with the reassurance you need.

We are planning assemblies this week to help explain what is happening which I am sure will help with any concerns or anxiety they might have about the next few weeks. Please spend some time with your child also over the Easter break going through the letter from last Friday.

Face Coverings

This together with other preventative measures has become part of our daily routine. A huge thank you to you and the students for working with us as it has no doubt provided a safer classroom environment where many students are in close contact with each other and staff.

End of Term Arrangements

We finish on Thursday 1st April 2021 between 1pm and 1.30pm. The arrangements for this day will be the same as a Friday so that students and staff have one break and food provision is made available to those on the Muga.

We will then have a staggered finish with the older years exiting home first followed by the other years:

1pm-Yr11, 1.05pm-Yr12, 1.10pm-Yr13, 1.15pm-Yr10, 1.20pm-Yr9, 1.25pm-Yr8 and 1.30pm-Yr7.

*I must also take this opportunity to remind you once again about **not** driving into the Kings Reach Estate to drop off/pick up your child. The safety of all students and staff is our priority and it is put at risk during these times because of the increase in traffic on the roads outside the academy.*

Amended break times

Unfortunately, we need to swap some break times after the Easter holidays to avoid split lessons for Year 11, 12 & 13 as our focus turns to providing these students with time and opportunity to generate the evidence required for their GCSE and A level grades.

Therefore, the amended times for breaks after Easter up until May half-term, when they will be reviewed, are:

Breaks – (R) Restaurant / (M) Muga

Year	Break 1 (30mins)	Break 2 (30 mins)	Friday Break (20 mins)
7	M-F 10.00am (R)	M-Th 12.30pm (M)	12.30 (M)
8	M-F 10.00am (M)	M-Th 12.30pm (R)	12.00 (R)
9	M-F 9.30am (R)	M-Th 12.00pm (M)	12.00 (M)
10	M-F 9.30am (M)	M-Th 12.00pm (R)	-
11	M-F 10.30am (M)	M-Th 1.00pm (R)	-
12	M-F 10.30am (R)	M-Th 1.00pm (M)	-
13	M-F 10.30am (R)	M-Th 1.00pm (M)	-

 = Amended break time (Monday 19th April to Friday 28th May 2021)

Transition: Year 6 into 7, Year 11 into 12 and Year 13 into University/Work

I am delighted to inform you that at a recent local governor's board meeting I presented a case for a need to offer additional support for students moving between phases due to the disruption we have had over the last year. A small amount of additional funding has been granted to help with this aspect of change for our young people. Many thanks to the governors for making this happen and I know that our community will be better prepared and supported as a result.

Work will continue so that opportunities are provided for young people at DPA to engage with us prior to starting in Year 7 and 12. This is essential and even more so after school lockdowns this year. Students leaving us in Year 13 will be supported

around living away from home for the first time, being financial responsible and many other elements of being independent and having the right preparation for meeting these demands.

Newsletter – Spring Term 2021

Articles for our termly newsletter are being gathered but we have delayed publication until our return after the Easter break This we felt provided the maximum amount of time we had back together in school so that we captured more to do with the recent learning experiences. Our lockdown newsletters we know provided you with an overview about how fantastic our students and staff were during another phase of remote learning.

Many thanks for all your support over the last few weeks and we wish you and your family a relaxing and safe Easter break.

Yours sincerely



Nick Caulfield
Principal



Chris McNab
Associate Principal