



Duke's Secondary School

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Principal: Mr R Atkinson

Dear Parents/Carers

As we approach the end of term, I wanted to communicate with you to thank you for your support over the course of this term and to share important information about the start of next term.

This term has been another incredibly challenging time in school due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on our community. However, I feel that ultimately, this has been a successful term in school and we have managed to limit the impact of the Pandemic on the learning of our students. The attendance of students at our school over the last few months has been significantly higher than the national averages for secondary schools, and we have not had to send large numbers of students home to isolate, as was the case this time last year. This is in large part down to the support of our parents/carers in ensuring that our students are being tested regularly and therefore not bringing the virus into school where it could place other students and staff at risk.

Testing on return to school in January and Covid-19 measures As per Government guidance, we will be testing those students whose parents/carers have consented for Covid-19 once they return to school in January. If a student has had Covid-19 in the last 90 days and they are due to be tested in school, can parents/carers please let the school know. **Although we are testing students in school, it is probably more important that all students are tested using a LFT at home before they attend school on the 5th of January.** This is an important measure in protecting the school community from covid-19. If a student does test positive on a lateral flow device, then they must self-isolate and seek a PCR test for confirmation of the positive result. If a student tests positive before midnight on Sunday 19th December, you must still let the school know via this link: <https://forms.gle/LgKbnk3dFK9paNjw5>

Key Stage 3 assessments

In January, we will be developing our method of assessment for all year groups at Key Stage 3 to include a regular controlled assessment taken in examination conditions. The first of these assessments will take place in the week beginning 24th January and will be for English, Maths and some of the Ebacc subjects. A second assessment period will take place later in the year.

The reasons for this change is to begin to develop all students' familiarity and confidence with sitting controlled examinations, to begin to develop effective revision strategies in all students from an earlier age and also to improve the quality of the data that supports the teaching of all



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students. This is an assessment model that is used by a number of successful schools and it has been proven to have a positive impact on overall student success in both GCSE and A-Level examinations.

In preparation for the assessments, all students will be provided with knowledge organisers which will contain all of the information that they need to know for these assessments. Homework in the run up to the assessment period will be to use the information from these knowledge organisers for revision purposes. It would be very helpful if all parents and carers were able to support in ensuring the use of these resources in revision.

The results of these assessments will be reported to parents shortly after each of the assessment periods. Outcomes may result in some students moving classes to ensure that they are receiving the correct levels of support in their studies.

Uniform

We have noticed over the course of this term that the standards of uniform have deteriorated a little with some students. In January, we will be enforcing uniform expectations much more robustly, and the expectation will be that students arrive at school each day in the correct uniform. The school uniform is either a shirt, tie and blazer, black trousers or skirt and plain black footwear or on core PE days the school PE uniform. The PE uniform is a black school PE T-shirt, a black school hoodie and plain black tracksuit trousers or leggings (minor branding on leg wear is permitted). If a student does not own a school hoodie, we will permit a plain black long sleeved top, which can be worn underneath the T-shirt. No other uniform variations will be permitted and outside coats, jackets, hoodies or other non uniform items should not be worn inside the school building. Students not conforming should expect to be challenged and a sanction may be put in place.

All that remains for me to do is wish you and your family all the best for the Christmas holidays, and I sincerely hope that everyone in our community stays safe and well over the Christmas break.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Atkinson
Principal