



Friday 12 February 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

In my final letter to you of this term, I wish to share some news on the work of our Parent & Teacher Association, look ahead to next term and thank you for your support and encouragement over the past six weeks. I think we have all felt the relentlessness of the challenges each day and fully deserve a few days of rest before we go again in a few days' time. By that point, we all hope to know more about the way in which our society, schools and movement will return to normal.

Our Amazing Parent & Teacher Association (PTA)

In my letter to you [at the end of January](#), I was able to highlight and celebrate those who have generously supported CNS students throughout this pandemic. Local charities like THRIVE, alongside generous contributions of laptops and money, plus a grant from the Chipping Norton Trust, have enabled us to build a bridge from where we were to where we are now.

Today, I wish to devote time to our PTA. In [my letter to you in December 2019](#), I provided a summary of how their fund raising had improved opportunities for students across many subjects.

Despite the forced cancellation of their traditional events (for example Chastleton House Teas, face painting at The Cornbury Festival and the Christmas Fayre), the PTA were able to press ahead with their Christmas raffle which meant they were, despite everything, able to generate a further £2,300. Earlier this week, Tanya Harrington and her team authorised the purchase of five dongles and ten Chromebooks for current and future students at CNS. In addition, there have been other contributions, including: 3D models of hydrocarbon molecules for chemistry; £430 worth of additional kitchen accessories for food technology; and £2000 towards new tents, rucksacks and sleeping mats for the next wave of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

Meanwhile, the PTC also successfully applied for charity status and this enabled them to secure a £1700 grant from the Town Council for four, brand new, full-size table tennis tables.

After Easter, their new Just Giving page will be shared with you and we hope it will extend the ways in which you may wish to become involved in this team of very committed and creative people. If you wish to know more or join that team then please do get in touch with Tanya Harrington on tanya.harrington70@gmail.com.



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Volunteers Sought to Support Mass Testing

At the very bottom of this letter I have added a further section for any parent or carer, or friend of the school, who might be interested in supporting our mass testing programme. If this is something that might interest you, or someone you know, then please do take a look.

Building for the Future

You may recall that we completed a huge refurbishment programme that led to the opening of our new sixth form centre almost twelve months ago. A year later, we are close to unveiling our latest transformation that will secure a huge improvement for our older students who will have their own eating and social area. I shall not say where just yet and instead leave you with a before and after image to give you a sense of the project that is now nearing completion. Can you guess where this is? See more by [following this link](#).

It is just another reason why we are so keen to get back to normal and reopen our entire school for all students as soon as possible.



This might be the right moment to draw attention to some of my colleagues, whose work in our school is so important. Mrs Trimmer (School Business Manager), Mr Edwards (Site Manager) and Mr Shadbolt (Assistant Site Manager), have worked tirelessly with contractors to ensure these and other projects have been completed on time, on budget and to a *very* high standard. It is our partnership with the *River Learning Trust* that enabled us to secure additional capital grants that make these kinds of improvements possible. Our school site and facilities are brilliant, but we aim to make them truly exceptional, year on year.

Staffing Updates...

After half term we shall welcome back Mrs du Crôs from her maternity leave. In her absence we have been so grateful to Ms Miles for stepping into her dance shoes and providing seamless tutoring and teaching in dance *and* drama. I know that colleagues, students and families are so grateful to Ms Miles for her energy, enthusiasm and skill. Meanwhile, Dr Pattison will now commence her maternity leave and so we wish her every happiness in the days, weeks and months ahead. Mr Wood will be taking Dr Pattison's classes and we know that the students will make him feel really welcome too.

And Finally...

That is about it for another term. We do not expect to be in a position to share more information about the reopening of schools until 22 February at the earliest. In any case, I shall be in touch again next term and until then wish you all a safe, restful and happy break.

Yours faithfully

Mr Doherty

Headteacher

Volunteers Sought to Support Mass Testing

Unless guidance from The Department for Education changes, we expect to test all students for the COVID-19 virus when they return to school. Details on how this will operate were sent to you on Friday 15 January. That [letter can be found on our website](#), in addition to [a special additional section of our website](#) that is dedicated to lateral flow testing (see opposite).

You may recall that I asked families to provide their consent for these tests and wish to take this opportunity to ask you to do so now if you have not done so already:

- If your child is in Years 7 to 11 please [follow this link](#) to provide consent.
- If you are in Year 12 or Year 13 please [follow this link](#) to provide consent.



Over two-thirds of students have been given, or have provided, consent already; even though the date we shall commence the mass testing programme is not yet known. Nevertheless, you will be aware that we have been testing all staff on site twice each week and all students who are still in school have been tested on two occasions. Thankfully, we have not had any positive results.

The time is approaching for us to consider how we might upscale our testing from about one test every three minutes to one every minute. This would enable us to mass test our entire student population over a period of ten school days. We do not know if all students will return on the same day, or if their return will be staggered. We shall cross that bridge when we come to it but for now we would like to see if we can recruit ten volunteers to help us with a mass testing programme as students return to school.

Once students start to return, we shall be completely focussed on ensuring that every minute in school is worthwhile and so we do not wish to ask teachers or other colleagues to distract them from the core business of teaching and learning whilst we get back to normal. This is why we wish to temporarily extend our staffing capacity to reopen and also to rapidly test through the engagement of volunteers.

The leadership and guidance teams will be ensuring that all students arrive and depart the test centre safely and miss as little of their lessons as possible.

What do we need?

We need ten people (over the age of 18) who can give up ten consecutive days to join our testing team. We need two to join the registration team, three to support the swabbing process, four to become test operatives and one to be a test result uploader.

What is involved?

Each of those four roles is very different. The registrars and uploaders need good IT skills (e.g. Excel), the swab assistants need good people skills, whilst test operatives need to enjoy some lab work in a safe environment.

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Would I receive training?

Yes. You would become a temporary member of staff and would therefore need to be trained both in how we safeguard young people, and in the role you would undertake in the mass testing programme. Both would be straightforward and would initially involve being shown how to conduct the tests by those currently undertaking the role.

What do I need to do?

If this is something that interests you, please [follow this link](#) to a Google Form that will collect your details. We ought to state that anyone who becomes a member of staff will be required to undergo a full Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check.

Will this role be paid?

It is possible that we may be able to retrospectively claim £10.01 per hour for those who join the team. However, it is far from certain if the government will be able to fund these positions. It is therefore better to assume that the role would be unpaid.

What if I cannot volunteer for ten days or consecutive / full days?

We know that we shall have to put together a plan based on the existing and voluntary staff we have available. Ideally, we much prefer volunteers who can commit for full and consecutive days in order to ensure we can rapidly test a large number of students. Furthermore, it will be much easier to train and manage a smaller number of volunteers who are able to work over a shorter, more intense period.

What would be the hours of work?

We anticipate that testing programmes would commence at 9:00am and finish by 2:30pm. We do not yet know if the ten days of testing will occur on consecutive days or be broken down into two or three chunks – that all depends on how year groups will return to school across the country. This is why we need to plan for two or even three contingencies.

Will I be safe?

The training programme is comprehensive, yet simple. There are strict standard operating procedures in place that we must all adhere to for our own safety and the safety of others. A full risk assessment has also been devised and is regularly reviewed. All staff who take part in the testing programme are tested at the start of their day and will be expected to return home to self-isolate if they test positive.

If you wish to express your interest in becoming a volunteer then [please follow this link](#).

Thank you!

