



Friday 21 May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I recall that one of the arguments over the years to rethink the summer exam season was the sheer heat or humidity of those weeks. This has been one less demand on our year 11s and year 13s this year!

Year 11 and 13s

Mr Trainer and Mrs Armistead have written to the students and families of those whose formal lessons and internal assessments will end in the next few days. As ever, it is a bittersweet time for them all and I am grateful to Mr Ward, Mrs Davison, Mr Robinson and Mrs Cottrell, for leading the plans to ensure their 'final day' was (year 13) and is (year 11) as traditional and enjoyable as possible. Good luck to them all and to those looking forward to attending the prom at Heythrop in July.

In terms of the volume of internal assessments, this has been the most demanding week for those students. Nevertheless, they have risen to the occasion and it is clear that they can see light at the end of the tunnel - and they can look forward to a period of rest!

Students staying on into our sixth form will then commence their bridging studies in June and, like our current year 12s, will therefore have a major head-start when they embark on their A levels with us next year. Other destinations will launch their bridging work too.

Once our year 11s and 13s begin to enjoy a period of rest and lowered demands on their time, my colleagues will remain busier than ever with the final rounds of standardisation, moderation and marking that will lead into the teacher assessed grade process, to be completed by the middle of June.

Year 10s and 12s

In Term 6, our oldest remaining students will then have their own end of year internal examinations. These are important milestones for them and us to understand how much progress they have made this year, and to help inform curriculum plans and individual student's goals for next year.

Year 9s

Exciting times for our year 9s as well because they will begin their GCSE and BTEC courses straight after half term. They will be issued with brand new timetables and can look forward to new classes, rooms and teachers that will allow them to focus on their favourite subjects.

Continued...

Years 7 and 8

Whilst we are not planning to hold formal end of year tests or examinations, the normal cycle of class assessments will continue and feed into our wider planning for next year.

Changes in Term 6

Although the zones will continue until July, we shall be making a few adjustments to allow us to spread out a little more in the final months of the year. Year 10 will be moving into the area currently used by the Year 11s and this will allow the year 9s to spread into some of the area used by Year 10 as they embark on their GCSEs and BTECs. Our Year 7s will also be given access to the MUGA, giving them more space to run around and to play ball games in particular.

And ACE End of the Summer Term

Whilst plans are at an early stage, we do intend to end this academic year in a way that will try to reward and acknowledge the challenges of the past 18 months. Assuming that the number of COVID cases remains extremely low, we wish to devote the final three full days (Monday 19 July to Wednesday 21 July) towards some alternate curriculum experiences.

An A.C.E. Week may be the perfect antidote for us all to look forward to and generate a wide selection of opportunities for our students to spend time with different groups of students and spend more time on particular interests that they wish to pursue. We are not interested in organising expensive day trips and wish instead to take advantage of our superb facilities, beautiful site, local attractions and, above all, one another's company for a few days before we break up.

My colleagues and I will set out some ideas just after half term and feel sure you will also look forward to ending the year in a celebratory manner.

The final day of term will be Thursday 22 July 2021, finishing at approximately 12:30pm. You may recall that we were due to finish early on Wednesday 21 July as well, but we changed this back in December so that we could start the Christmas holiday one day earlier. This means that **Wednesday 21 July will also be a normal school day that finishes at 3:15pm.**

Summer School 2021

You may recall that I outlined the possibility of us running a summer school between Monday 23 and Friday 27 August 2021 for our up-and-coming year 7s. Those interested took part in a survey and we will now use that information to draw up some detailed plans and proposals that enable families to 'sign-up'. If you took part in that survey and / or have a child joining us in year 7 in September, please do look out for further communication from us straight after half term.

The Start of the 2021/22 Academic Year

With the Local Governing Body's agreement, we have decided to hold two consecutive INSET Days at the start of the new academic year in September. We fully expect to be 'back to normal' with teachers in their own classrooms and all students resuming use of all specialist rooms. With that preparation in mind, plus the need for us as staff to ensure we begin the year really successfully, the benefits of us having two full days to prepare are huge.

Meanwhile, the start of the new term across the county lands on a Wednesday. Typically, schools begin with at least one INSET Day and then have their year 7s back, only, on that first day. Therefore, the thought of asking all of years 8 to 13 to return for one day on Friday 3 September does not appeal.

Therefore, the start of the new term will be as follows:

- Wed 1 September INSET Day 1
- Thu 2 September INSET Day 2
- Fri 3 September First day of term for Year 7s + pre-term meetings with invited families
- Mon 6 September First day of term for all other students.

I hope that sharing this information with you now will help all families plan their summer break.

School Improvement Goals, 2021-24

Once Term 6 begins, I intend to share with you the emerging school improvement priorities for CNS over the coming three years. There are four key areas and each one will be explored one week at a time, including an invitation to comment each week as that plan takes shape in time for September. More on this next term.

Have a lovely weekend!

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Doherty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Barry Doherty

Headteacher