



Friday 1 October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you received my generic letter to families yesterday, informing you of further COVID-19 cases amongst our students. Sadly, we are all going to have to get used to this in the coming weeks and months and we seek to reassure families that if your children have to miss school they are able to join their lesson virtually, *if they feel well enough to do so*. The BBC ran an interesting report on the 'worst cold ever' that has done the rounds, and we have certainly seen a number of our students affected by this as well.

I understand that all families have now received invitations to provide consent for both the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. These remain scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13 October. Please do approach health professionals referred to on those communications if you have any questions at all.

Open Evening 2021

School will end at the end of period 3 this coming Thursday 7 October. This means that students will leave the school just after 12:30pm and normal buses will be operating. Families are reminded that we will happily supervise any children that need to stay on the site if that supports individual circumstances. Please [contact](#) your son or daughter's tutor if this is something that affects your family.

Our oldest students will be our tour guides and we are hoping that a very large proportion of all of other students join us on the evening (4:45pm until 8:00pm) to be with teachers in all the different subject areas. Please do encourage your children to support the school because our greatest assets in the eyes of visitors are your children and my colleagues.

The open evening is then followed by an INSET Day, which means that school is closed to all students on Friday 8 October 2021.

Meet The Tutor Evening – Monday 18 October

On Monday 18 October, all parents and carers will be invited to take part in the virtual meetings with tutors. We shall be using the same online software as before and know this proved very, very popular with families (and staff) for all sorts of reasons. For those unfamiliar with how to log on and so forth, please look out for a letter in the coming days that will set everything out clearly. Even though that meeting is only two weeks' away, we ask that if there is ever a problem or question that cannot wait for a meeting then do just get in touch right away. Emailing the right teacher or tutor is always the quickest way to get the conversation started and [we have updated our contacts page](#) to help you do that easily.

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Parent Voice

You may recall that all parents and carers were asked to participate in an online survey in July. We are really grateful for the very high participation rate and how this has provided us with a rich source of information about what we are doing well and what we need to do to improve.

I hope you will forgive me for getting straight to those areas for improvement and then sharing an insight into what we now do with that data and conclusions.

- Whilst a very high proportion of parents and carers said their child had never been bullied in school or outside of school (81%), roughly one third of the proportion that had experienced bullying felt that we could improve the way we respond to those incidents. It is easy to hypothesise or speculate about what might have been in the minds of those who provided that response, but we want to have a really clear understanding. For this reason, if you are a parent or carer of a child that has been bullied (in school or out of school) we now ask you to [complete this follow up mini-questionnaire](#) to find out more – so that we can take action. It will only take about 2-5 minutes. *All responses given are completely anonymous.*
- Parents and carers of children with special educational needs submitted a mixed response when asked if their children received ‘all of the support they needed to succeed’. In the same spirit of seeking to be an ever-improving school, we now ask those parents and carers (whose children have special educational needs) to [follow the link to this mini-questionnaire](#) so that we can also learn more and act decisively. *All responses given are also completely anonymous.*

This is not to say that these are the only two things that we have taken from the survey – far from it. Our own self-evaluation and school improvement priorities are also guided and fine-tuned by feedback from our students and colleagues.

The parent survey indicated a range of key strengths. If you recall, you were presented with a series of statements and were asked to indicate if you strongly agreed, agreed, were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed. As you might imagine, every statement resulted in a cross-section of feedback.

Nevertheless, all RLT schools look at their own data and then compare this to the RLT secondary school average (which tend to be very positive) *and* any available national averages. This enables us to avoid complacency but be reassured with your feedback on a variety of areas that related to overall satisfaction, students’ feelings of safety, awareness of who to contact, high expectations, communication, keeping you informed and recommending this school to others.

We also read every single one of your comments and I can assure you that nothing you tell us is wasted.

Going forward, we shall be asking parents and carers to complete the full survey two times each year. Once every July (along with all parents and carers across the River Learning Trust), and also after the Parent-Teacher Consultation event that takes place for each year group at some point in the academic year. We feel this will ensure we are self-aware and responsive.

Student Voice

I shall use next week's letter to summarise our very exciting plans to expand our student voice programme as well. We are conscious of the need to stay in touch with what it is like to be a student at this school, or to be a young person today - but not over-do it with endless surveys! More on this next week.

Do have a great weekend when it arrives.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Dillly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Headteacher