



Friday 2 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope the summer has been fun and relaxing, and that your children are looking forward to seeing their friends and returning to school in a few days' time. Staff are already back and so I wanted to begin the term with a few bits of news and various updates which I hope you will find useful.

### **A level Results**

I trust that families will have seen the [recent press release](#) on our website that detailed some of the headline results achieved by our students. If not, here are the highlights that are always worth recapping...

- 39% of all grades were A\* or A
- 69% of all grades were A\* to B
- 92% of all grades were A\* to C
- 100% of all grades were A\* to E

We were particularly pleased with the sharp rise in the very highest grades and the virtual absence of D or E grades (there were no U grades). This success can be seen in the proportion of students in each subject who left with either a grade A\*, A or B. For example: Further mathematics (100%); drama & theatre (100%); mathematics (89%); English language and literature (86%); chemistry (85%); physics (75%); fine art (75%); history (71%); sociology (70%); biology (69%) and English literature (69%).

These outcomes (and their exciting destinations) are the result of a group of students working their socks off for over two years. Each one stepped up during and after the miserable pandemic period and went the extra mile, side by side with their superb teachers. These outcomes are a genuine team effort and whilst great teaching and learning experiences are the foundation, this cohort of students exemplifies the very best in terms of attitudes, work ethic and dedication.

We now look forward to the sixth form open evening, which will be taking place on Thursday 10 November.

### **GCSE Results**

Our second set of results were equally superb and you can read more about them in [the press release](#) on our website. We were particularly proud of the significant improvements in the outcomes of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable students, and also the exceptional jump in the proportion of students securing the very highest grades. Some of the tremendous headline data includes the following:

- Close to 80% secured five GCSEs or more including both English and mathematics.
- 51% of students achieved a grade 7 to 9 in English, whilst 92% secured a grade 4 or above.
- 34% of students achieved a grade 7 to 9 in mathematics, whilst 87% secured a grade 4 or above.
- 80% of all students secured a grade 4 to 9 in at least two sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), with approximately one third securing the top grades (7 to 9) in biology, chemistry and physics.



- Close to 40% of all grades were in the 7 to 9 range, with almost one quarter being grades 8 or 9. In French, 91% achieved a grade 9. In fact, 60% of all geographers secured a grade 7, 8 or 9.
- Compared to 2019, the average grade achieved by all students rose by more than half a grade.

### ***What about next year?***

We enjoy a low staff turnover and a universal dedication amongst teachers to constantly reflect on and improve the way that teaching, learning and assessment takes place in their classrooms. Our students are more focussed, well-behaved and up for the journey ahead. This means that we can look forward to more great outcomes and exciting destinations for any student who is prepared to work hard, work with us, and make a few sacrifices along the way.

### ***Everyone Achieving. Everyone Belonging.***

Our goal is to secure a school in which all students are equally likely to be successful. A student's gender, postcode or ethnicity, for instance, will not determine their success. The extent to which each child maximises their potential hinges on the degree to which they value education and school, and whether they have faith in their ability to be successful and overcome difficulties. The student, their family, and the school play a fundamental role in securing that value and those expectations. Term begins next week and we stand ready to go again for your son or daughter.

### ***Excellence As Standard***

After a long summer break, it is hard for everyone to get back into the swing of school and all of its associated demands. The rescheduled sports day (Friday 9 September) and activities day (Monday 12 September) will provide a more balanced start to term, nevertheless we are of course seeking your support to ensure that standards are exceptionally high from day one: punctuality, attendance, appearance, equipment, engagement and homework. Teachers' confidence that all lessons may proceed uninterrupted and as envisaged makes for a happier and more successful school, but this year we wish to see exactly the same kind of exemplary behaviour we always see in classrooms, matched by what we see and hear in less structured times and places. We shall talk with the students about this next week as we seek to step up our standards once more this year.

### ***Welcoming New Students***

A record number of year 7 students will be joining us on Tuesday and enjoy the whole school for themselves for the day. As you would expect, they have benefited from a great transition programme that will of course continue into the new term. Our new year 12s will return with all other students on Wednesday and we must give a special mention to all of the brand new students who have chosen to join our outstanding sixth form from other schools.

### ***Welcoming New Staff***

With a growing school comes a growing staff body and with this in mind, Mrs Gascoigne and Mrs Campbell will be joining our superb mathematics department. Whilst Mr Stella (English) and Mrs Licence (science) will also add even greater strength to our core teams. Ms Robbins will add to our outstanding social science team as the new head of psychology, with Mr S Ward (year 8) and Mr Goodson (year 9) bringing their considerable experience in pastoral care into the lives of our younger students. Meanwhile, Mr Tani is our new network manager and will oversee the completion of our ambitious plans that are already well underway.

### ***Summer Works***

Assuming we can secure the contractors and the goods, the summer holiday offers an ideal opportunity to refresh, replenish and refurbish the site. Students will return to our new school hall, complete with new dining tables, comfortable chairs and cinema screen. Brand new computer rooms have been created, alongside the installation of the first batch of digital interactive display panels. I am looking forward to the resumption of traditional assemblies next Thursday when the full impact of our new school hall will be felt by all students.

### *Student and Parent & Carer Surveys*

In my letters to you on Friday 8 and Friday 15 September, I intend to summarise the results of the feedback provided by students and yourselves. As with all data, we might pour over it for hours but we have pulled out several key areas that we hope to see an improvement in this year and will share this with you in due course.

### *And finally...*

And so, good luck with new bedtimes and routines which will come as a bit of a shock to us all.

If you have any final questions then please do get in touch with either your son or daughter's tutor, or senior colleagues: [Mrs Faulkner](#) (years 7 and 8), [Mrs Gannon](#) (Years 9 to 11) or [Mr P Ward](#) (Sixth form).

Have a lovely final summer weekend and roll on the new school year – the 94<sup>th</sup> in the school's history!

Yours faithfully



Barry Doherty  
Headteacher