

19th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for your continued support as we try to return to some level of normality. I am sure that you are as hopeful as I that we have now permanently returned to on-site schooling. The national data for infections certainly seems to suggest that things are continuing to improve, although I acknowledge that we need to continue to remain very cautious and follow the advice of expert scientists.

Student Assessments

Over the last few weeks, our staff have been undertaking the huge task of collating Teacher Assessed Grades for our students in exam groups. This process has included the marking of assessed work by our teachers alongside the use of a number of other evidence sources.

The workload that this has created is considerable; very much more than would be usual. Therefore, I ask for your forbearance as this becomes a short-term priority for the staff team. Assessments for other year groups will also follow in the coming weeks so that we have a firm understanding of the progress made by all students in our school this year.

Covid Risk Mitigation

We have recently relaxed the rule around face-masks and coverings to those that existed in our school in later Autumn 2020, in line with new government guidance. This means that they must be worn in communal areas where it is difficult to socially distance but are not worn within classrooms. Our students and teachers have adapted to this change quickly and without fuss.

In most respects our Covid prevention measures remain at a high level. Our year groups continue to be taught in bubbles and are separated from one another by being taught in their own area of the school site, with staggered finish times at the end of the school day.

At lunch times we give each year group their own designated slot in the canteen or the hall alongside time on the playground. At all times our year group bubbles are kept, in so far as possible, separated from one another and supervised by staff to support this happening. As you can imagine, this is quite a logistical challenge but I have been impressed at how well our community has pulled together to support this.

Prior to the end of this school year, we hope to reintroduce year group assemblies in addition to a number of school community activities. Rules permitting, this will include our 'Community Week' in July, which is five days of activities focused around student engagement and personal development.

Gradually, we will be welcoming visitors back onto the school site. Some meetings with parents, external agencies and partner organisations have already happened. Nonetheless, where these are beginning to take place it is with a high level of risk mitigation in place.

Visits to Site

During Term 6, it remains our hope that we can have our Year 6 students onto site for transition from primary to secondary. We also aim to be able to welcome the parents of our new students so that they will be able to visit the school. I am sure that other parents will also like to visit and we will support this as soon as permissible.

As ever, should you have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact your child's form tutor or head of year. We have a large pastoral team here at The Abbey that are well trained and experienced in supporting with a wide variety of emotional, behavioural and mental health needs. They are always available to respond to you, whatever your issue.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dr Rowland Speller'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dr Rowland Speller
Headteacher