

20 September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Start of term

All our students appear very happy to be back in school and have started the academic year with much more optimism for normality than we did this time last year. We have also welcomed more Year 7 students to our school than we have in over 20 years who seem to have settled very quickly into our Oakmoor Family.

I am pleased that we have been able to return to our vertical mentoring system. It is fantastic to see students from different year groups supporting new students to our school and enjoying each other's company.

It is also lovely to see our students fully engaged with their learning once again as we visit classrooms and walk through our buildings.

New Staff

We are fortunate to enjoy very low staff turnover at Oakmoor. Staff and students enjoy mutually respectful working relationships making our school such a lovely place to learn and to work. As we continue to grow in popularity, I have added to our staff team.

This term we welcome the following new colleagues in alphabetical order:

Mr Broadbent – Science Teacher
Mrs Coughlin – Catering Assistant
Miss Evans – Teaching Assistant
Miss Ferris - Dance and Cover Teacher
Ms Gregory – Science Teacher
Mr Nash - Performing Arts and Computing Teacher
Ms Percival – Mathematics Teacher
Mrs Walker-Wallis – English Teacher
Miss Whistance – Reprographics Assistant
Ms White – Library Manager

Breaktimes

Last year we ran 2 split breaks of 20 minutes to support with infection control. It was clear that more students were enjoying meals from the Dining Hall and there was more space for students on the Astro and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or to sit and eat during breaks. I decided to continue with this for the new academic year as I am sure we would all agree that these are desirable benefits to hold onto.

We have also added to our sports facilities with the introduction of eight new outdoor table tennis tables. Table Tennis is a popular sport in our PE curriculum and our students will enjoy having access to this facility during breaktimes.

Last year we had separate dining spaces for each year group, as we had to keep year groups apart. This was not ideal as we had to use the Theatre Hall and Dance Studio, taking these learning spaces out of our curriculum during parts of every day. This term, it has quickly become clear that without the separate dining spaces for each year group and with a larger year 7 group, students are spending slightly longer queuing for meals and drinks than last year, particularly in break 2, negating some of the gains.

The document attached shows a model which essentially follows the 'pre-covid' timings for half the school and a slight change to accommodate the split breaks for the other half. This would give all students 5 extra minutes of breaktime in the morning and 10 extra minutes in the afternoon. Both these breaks are longer than we had prior to 2020, by 5 minutes each breaktime.

I would welcome any feedback today or tomorrow via our email account - enquiries@oakmoor.hants.sch.uk - please add the subject line "Breaktimes", so that the messages can be swiftly identified. Students have been asked for their feedback in this morning's mentor session and were overwhelmingly positive about the proposed timings.

Covid-19 Vaccinations for 12-15 year olds

As you may be aware, the Government has announced that all 12-15 year-olds are eligible to be offered the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19.

These vaccinations are voluntary and, whilst they may be given in school, the process will be managed by Public Health England and the NHS in line with other vaccinations offered to young people.

We have had an initial phone conversation with our local team and once we receive information from the NHS about their vaccination programme, we will share this with you. There will be details in the communication about how you can gain further information or contact the NHS so that they can answer any queries you may have.

Obtaining consent for the vaccine will be managed by the NHS. School staff will not be involved in this or able to answer any queries on this. Further information will be sent to you once we receive this. We understand from the initial conversation that vaccines will not be administered without parental consent, as has been suggested in the media.

Infection rates in Bordon

You may have read that the rates of transmission in Bordon are slightly higher than other parts of Hampshire, which has not been the case previously. Whilst the Government has made it clear that schools should not require any special infection control measures, we have remained cautious to keep our community as safe as possible. We have continued with our additional day time cleaning contract that we started last year, we have kept our hand sanitiser stations across our site and we are limiting visitors to school. For those who do visit we continue to request face coverings and social distancing. We have also maintained the option for all students and staff to wear a face covering should they wish to.

On site events

As part of our infection control measures to keep the whole community as safe as possible, we have decided to host our evening events and parent evenings online for this term. Clearly, with our whole country fully re-opening, there is uncertainty around infection rates. We very much look forward to when we can meet face-to-face in larger numbers. For the time being, I know that many of us have family members who we still want to protect as much as we can, and we believe this is a sensible approach for the time being. We will run our Open Evening with several additional infection control measures in place.

Clubs and Extra Curricular Activities

We are now able to run our clubs and activities across different year groups which has opened up lots more opportunities for our students. With more staff joining the school, this has also increased our capacity to offer new opportunities. We have created a PowerPoint presentation detailing the clubs that we are running this half term. As you will see, it is wonderful to be able to offer so much to extend the learning that takes place during lesson time. I would encourage you to look through this half term's offer and discuss this with your child/ren. Our clubs are free to attend. Students may be requested to sign up for some clubs which is a change from some primary schools and there is no expectation on parents and carers to do this.

We will continue to update the presentation below and post it on our website with new clubs throughout the year.

[Extracurricular - Oakmoor School](#)

New Parents and Carers

As well as up to 190 new sets of parents and carers who have joined Year 7, we have also welcomed over 40 new sets of parents of children in other year groups who have changed secondary school. We extend a warm welcome to you all. Existing parents and carers will confirm that we enjoy excellent working relationships with our families for the benefit of the young people in our school and community.

We look forward to meeting you all soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hemmings', written in a cursive style.

Mr P. Hemmings
Headteacher