

18 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will already be aware, as a result of Covid we had to make significant changes to our timetable, how we have operated in school and our plentiful infection control measures. As we look to progress back to a more normal way of working, we will be trialling a move back to our original breaktimes. This will mean that rather than running 4 breaks across the school day, we will return to having the same break and lunchtime for all students. This is what we have done for many years prior to Covid; it is what most schools do and is something that we are keen to return to as it significantly contributes to our whole school family ethos.

There are many positive impacts of being able to return to this, especially as we move into the spring and summer months. Some of these were requested at student council and I am sure you will be able to recognise the positive impacts listed below.

- As students will share breaktimes together, there will not be the noise disruption to learning from outside the buildings, which has been evident throughout our forced timetable change.
- The 4xbreak timetable significantly impacted learning time in PE lessons, as the facilities were needed for play at breaks. PE lessons will now return to their normal lesson length, allowing increased learning and active time.
- Active 'play' time at breaks was limited to 15 minutes. PE facilities will be open for longer throughout break and lunchtime, providing greater flexibility around when students choose to eat and further activity time for students.
- The change of timetable will mean that we are able to staff the Sports Hall as an additional facility to allow access to other sporting activities such as badminton.
- Along with the Dining Hall, we will also be able to open the Dance Studio as a second warm indoor space for students to sit during breaktimes.
- The reduction in breaks will also allow for increased staff presence during breaktimes, which means that we are able to monitor and support our students more effectively.
- I have been able to remove the Pastoral Team from the duty rota so that they can provide additional pastoral care for 1 to 1 and small groups of students as they used to do.

As you may already be aware, students have already started to experience a change this week as we have begun our trial of how we can successfully manage the Dining

Hall system. I know that this has been a concern for some of parents and carers and I wanted to make sure you are aware of the changes that we have put in place to ensure our students have the maximum time to sit down and eat.

As a result of this change, we will be operating two queues around the outside of the Dining Hall (rather than the middle as before) to allow students to purchase hot food. Payment will be taken from two tills in the centre of the Hall behind the serving area. This has already had a positive impact and I am sure it will continue to improve as the students become more used to the new system.

In addition, when we return after half term, our dining staff will also be serving cold food and drink from the outside shelter hatch to the rear of the South Building by the sculpture garden, which can then be taken inside the Dining Hall or Dance Studio to eat. Students will be asked to remember that hot food will not be served from this area; it is there to assist the serving process by separating the hot and cold food areas.

We appreciate that changes will inevitably bring about different challenges and we strongly believe that this is the right decision for our students and staff team. We will always work to provide the very best outcomes for all stakeholders in all that we do and appreciate your ongoing support.

Face Coverings

Thank you to all students, parents and carers following our decision to reintroduce face coverings when cases rose last month. Our cases are back into single figures and significantly below national cases. After half term we will remove the requirement for students to wear face coverings. Should students wish to continue wearing coverings they are very welcome to do so. We will keep this infection control measure under constant review and in line with government guidelines and health authority advice.

Finally, on behalf of all our staff, may I wish you and your families a relaxing half term break.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Beere
Assistant Headteacher