



The Priory School

Headteacher: A Pope BA (Hons) PGCE MA
Longden Road, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY3 9EE

01743 284000
info@tpstrust.co.uk
www.tpstrust.co.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

With the Christmas break fast approaching, I wanted to send you my last full letter of the autumn term and start it off with heartfelt thanks. Although we are all at some distance to parents currently your support and messages to staff have not gone unnoticed and it has really helped to lift everyone's spirits. It has been wonderful to see pupils able to enjoy their time back at school, benefit from face to face lessons but more importantly their interactions with each other. We have been able to continue relatively uninterrupted with thanks to everyone sticking to our policies and procedures. Thank you for keeping in close contact with us in relation to your household's health as this has undoubtedly been a crucial part in ensuring we have a clear picture of students who have to self-isolate.

Face-masks

Could we please ask that you check your child has a face-mask and a spare with them every day? We will continue to reinforce this in school but, there are a number of pupils who are starting to arrive without a mask. We do have a small supply on site but they are only for use as a very last resort and it is important that pupils have one to wear in communal areas and corridors for everyone's safety. At the end of lockdown on 2nd December I welcomed back some of our clinically extremely vulnerable staff and I need to ensure they are protected through everyone wearing a mask.

Coats

As the weather is now becoming increasingly colder, students would benefit from bringing a coat to school, as well as wearing plain black leggings or tracksuit bottoms on PE days. We are encouraging them to be outside as much as possible and classrooms have increased ventilation with doors and windows open, so more would benefit from having the extra layer.

Christmas Quiz

It was great to see so many families join in our charity quiz last Wednesday. It was wonderful to see it so well supported and I hope you found the online version as enjoyable as the live event. I hope it went some way to families feeling part of the school community.

End of term business

We will be celebrating Christmas Jumper Day, this Friday on 11th December, with all proceeds going to charity. I look forward to seeing an interesting array of jumpers as well as the obligatory tinsel and Santa hats. **Term will finish on 18th December and as this has been a long one for all, school will be closing at 1pm not the usual 2.50pm**, with all students expected to be off site by this time.

We will reinforce that they are not to visit other local primary or secondary schools and are to go straight home.

As part of our last day we have prepared an extended, virtual assembly to try to capture the spirit of Christmas. Mr Austin and Miss Jones have compiled some efforts from staff and students, which we are looking forward to sharing with pupils during their final registration period. This will be available for parents to watch, on the school website, so please log on, after the final day, to view it.

With the implications of sharing Christmas Cards amongst students and staff, we would encourage students to donate to one of the school charities rather than sending cards to each other or staff. If they do wish to send them to staff there will be a 'postbox' appearing in each zone where cards to staff can be placed, by the end of this week. Cards will then be quarantined, and issued to staff before the break.

Year 10 Information Evening

In normal times, we would have held an information evening for parents, hosted by our Heads of core subjects. Due to current restrictions, we cannot welcome you into school but we have uploaded videos from the Heads of Maths, English and Science to give you a clear overview of the work your child will be covering during their GCSE courses. The event can be found by following this link <https://priory.tpstrust.co.uk/parents/year-10-information-evening/>

Parental support section of the website

I mentioned in my previous letter that we are currently updating this section of the website to provide an area where you can access wider information about supporting the mental health and well-being of your child. More resources will be added over the next few weeks but please have a look to gain an overview of some of the wider work we have been carrying out with our young people. There is also a parental needs audit which you can complete to advise us of any specific help we could provide to support you at home. Please send in your ideas.

<https://priory.tpstrust.co.uk/parents/>

Year 11

Consultation Evening

We are trialling a new, online format for this event, which will be held in the New Year. I realise this will not be the same as a personal meeting but it will, hopefully, enable a more specific conversation with each subject teacher so parents have a clear picture of areas of focus in the final few months of the academic year.

The government has released an outline of proposed changes to the exam series, in the summer as well as how grades boundaries and exam content will change. These are aimed at supporting the cohort, nationally, and reducing any impact of the pandemic on young peoples' final grades, in what has been a very turbulent time for many. These changes are only in outline currently and we will write to Year 11 parents with further detail once this reaches us.

It has been confirmed that exams will run into July. There is no final official date as yet. This is largely due to the fact that, there could be extra contingency exam dates for those who may have missed a paper due to self-isolation. **I would strongly suggest that you do not book a holiday during the month of July at all, as this will not be taken into consideration by exam boards when making allowances for students, and could adversely affect a students' final grade.**

Whilst I realise that this Christmas period will still feel very different to everyone's normal celebrations I hope it gives you all time to relax and unwind with family. I look forward to seeing all of our pupils' return, in the New Year, with the glimmer of hope that we can return to some sort of normality in the not too distant future.

As things develop here, I will keep you up to date but if there is anything, in the meantime, please do get in touch.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Pope".

Mrs A Pope
Headteacher