



The Priory School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you and your families well. As we enter our third week of term I wanted to give you an update on life at school since our return and highlight some important events and reminders.

Covid measures

We review our Covid measures on a weekly basis. As you know from my letter at the end of last week we do still have some cases, which is reflective of case levels in the wider community. To prevent a further spread, we will keep these safety measures in place until we can see case numbers dropping off again. I wouldn't want to lift them too early to see a surge of cases into December and students unnecessarily missing school or school experiencing high levels of staff absence, which may lead to collapsed classes or timetable alterations. At this point in time, school is open and running as normal with case numbers reviewed on a daily basis. We would ask that if your child is identified as a close contact, that a precautionary PCR is undertaken. If they have no symptoms they are able to attend school as normal.

We encourage as many students as possible to continue to carry out twice-weekly lateral flow testing. If you do not currently have any LFT kits, please contact school so we can add you to our supply list.

With this in mind could I please emphasise that, unless exempt, students should still be wearing a facemask; bringing reusable ones from home. This measure helped our case numbers to reduce significantly before half term but will only work if the majority are wearing them. We may look to introduce a small charge for each mask issued to cover this cost if the strain on resources does not ease.

Social media – Instagram and TikTok

There has been a huge emphasis on this in the media and the impact that student-created accounts are having on teaching staff and their well-being. We carefully monitor both sites for any such accounts which may be personally damaging or embarrassing for any member of staff. If we find any such material, it will be reported but we will also carry out our own investigations to find out who created the materials. Any student found to be involved, will potentially face the most severe sanction school can impose. This approach is supported by our Trust. We will continue to educate and inform students on their responsible use of

social media and the impact it can have on others; please ensure your child is aware of the implications so they can avoid becoming involved – even to the extent of commenting on memes and videos.

Remembrance

Last Thursday we came together as a school community to pay our respects on Remembrance Day. We gathered briefly outside, and listened to not only readings from myself and the School Captains but also to the Last Post being played by a Year 10 student, Bethan MacDonald, who did a remarkable job. The student body's conduct was excellent and led to an incredibly moving service; they were a credit to the school.

Reflect and Progress Day

Pupils will have a 1:1 meeting with either their tutor, Head of House or member of SLT to review their progress so far and set some meaningful academic targets for the rest of the year, as well as have an opportunity to discuss any wider issues. The focus is a discussion between student and teacher and therefore it is not necessary for parents to attend although parents are welcome. The vast majority of these will be carried out via Teams. As per my paragraph on responsible online use, could you please reiterate to your child that their meeting must be carried out sensibly with no recordings, screen grabs etc to be taken. I know the majority would not dream of this. There may be a small number of tutors who will be asking their tutees to attend these meetings onsite instead of via Teams; they will communicate this directly with their tutees.

Work for the normal day's lessons will be set via Classcharts so pupils should be completing this at home when they are not in their tutor meeting.

Dropping off and picking up

A polite reminder that apart from parents collecting students who have mobility issues, there should be no dropping off and picking up on site. Please do not use the delivery area near the barrier. We are concerned about the increased volume of traffic using the main gate and the health and safety risks surrounding this.

Extracurricular

There is now a long list of extra-curricular clubs and activities listed on our school website at: <http://priory.tpstrust.co.uk/life-at-school/school-clubs/>. Please take a look and discuss their participation with your child. Attendance at after school clubs has been high this term, which is great to see, but I would like as many students as possible to take part in at least one club. If there is anything specific that your child would like to see offered then please let us know and we can look at our capacity to provide this.

The PE department have launched their 12km of Christmas Run with dates being shared via tutor groups and letters home. It will be wonderful to see students and staff completing their mileage on their circuit of the local area dressed in Santa hats and tinsel; even if children would like to walk part of the course all entries are welcome.

Year 11 and mock exams

If you are a parent or carer of a Year 11 student you will have received a letter on Friday about the recent Ofqual guidance with regards to exams next summer. It has been clarified that, whilst Ofqual hope exams will take place in some form, schools will also need to ensure that assessments based on exam-style questions and papers will need to be carried out termly, so we can have enough data in place should we need to revert to Teacher Assessed Grades or look at a combination of this alongside a reduced exam offer. A copy of our intervention and revision sessions has been issued and we would encourage as many pupils to attend so they approach their forthcoming mock examinations as well prepared as possible. Please encourage students to speak to their teachers if they need any further guidance or have any queries about exam content.

As always, thank you for your continued support of school through what continues to be an ever changing picture as we approach the winter months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Mrs A Pope
Headteacher