

9 September 2020

Dear Parent and Carer,

TWO IMPORTANT MATTERS TO HIGHLIGHT

Although we have our weekly bulletin I wanted to communicate with you today about two really important matters. The first is the arrival and departure of students from school and the second is internet safety and ensuring our young people do not view any inappropriate material on popular social media sites.

1 Start and End of the School Day

The start of term has been incredibly positive and I thank all parents for their support in ensuring this has been our reality. I am sure that, other than Year 9 students who do not return until tomorrow, your sons and daughters will have shared with you all of the measures that we have put in place as a school to promote safety and also all of the work that has been done by members of staff to ensure that learning commences immediately and is of the highest standard. At this stage, however, I want to highlight a few practical matters relating to the start and end of the day and to amend the timing of the end of the school day for two year groups. Please take careful note of the following.

a) In terms of the start of the day, students must arrive promptly at their allocated time. They cannot arrive early to line up as, apart from Year 7 and 11 who are our first students to arrive in the morning, all other year group students would encounter students from year groups other than their own if they arrive early and are at the Long Readings' Lane gate. We need to keep our Year Group 'bubbles' separate. We are doing this in school and we need to ensure that all of this hard work is not undermined by students mixing as they arrive at school. The timings for each year group are as follows.

Year 7 - to arrive at 8.30 am
Year 8 - to arrive at 8.55 am
Year 9 - to arrive at 8.55 am
Year 10 - to arrive at 8.45 am
Year 11 - to arrive at 8.30 am
Sixth Form - to arrive at 8.45 am

Students must keep their distance from one another and absolutely must maintain a 2 metres distance from students in the other year groups who have the same arrival time. Students line up in a different place and are admitted to the school site and building via different routes and entrances. Staff are present to supervise.

b) If students are being dropped off in cars they must be dropped some distance away from the school entrance. Another location needs to be identified which students then walk from. This can be on Long Readings' Lane, traffic restriction markings permitting, or in neighbouring roads. The same applies for pick up at the end of the day. No drop off should be made close to school. No cars should stop on the yellow zig zag lines outside school. Traffic enforcement officers will begin patrols in the area if this continues to be the case so for the benefit of all, it would be good to avoid this. Most vitally, however, the congestion presents a really significant safety hazard and increases the likelihood of an accident. Furthermore students need to move directly away from the school gate area/location at the end of the day. If they do not do so, not only do we have congestion but, most importantly, year groups will be coming into contact with one another immediately outside school which is not acceptable in this

current Covid context. I really value your support in relation to adhering to timings and drop off and pick up arrangements. It is essential in keeping everyone safe and well and reducing the risk of transmission of the Covid 19 virus that we get into these new habits.

c) To assist with avoiding congestion at the end of the day, we are changing the timings of departure for two year groups. The times of departure are as follows.

Year 7 - 2.35 pm

Year 8 - 2.55 pm

Year 9 - 3.00 pm

Year 10 - 2.50 pm

Year 11 - 2.40 pm

Sixth Form - 2.50 pm

As you can see from the above, the times for Year 7 and 8 have been amended. Students will be dismissed promptly and will need to leave the gate area and move away along Long Readings' Lane immediately. The area needs to be clear prior to the next year group being dismissed. Students being collected need to be collected promptly and a place for students to be collected by car, away from the school entrance and the immediate proximity of the school, needs to be discussed by parents with their children.

d) For everyone's safety it is absolutely essential that our young people do not loiter on their journey home and do not wait for friends from other year groups in neighbouring roads, the park areas or at the shops. We need students to mix only with their year group and siblings at this time. You will be aware that the Government has just announced restrictions on the number of people who should gather together. The reason for this appears to be primarily related to young people socialising and the consequent rise in virus transmission and infection. I ask parents to support our message in school with regards to our young people taking responsibility and behaving in ways that do not risk other people's health and well-being. It has been widely documented that older people can be more badly affected by the virus and therefore we need our young people to take care not to act in a way that could lead to transmitting the virus to adults and older people.

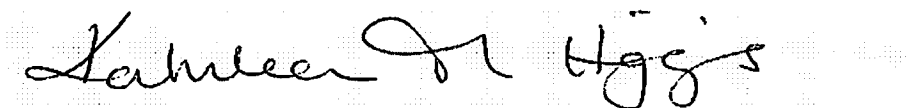
2 Internet Safety

Every year we remind our parents/carers about the need to be vigilant about the use of the internet and social media by their children. I am raising this today because I have become aware that there are some viral posts out and about internationally at the moment and young people can have easy access to these. When these are particularly nasty and we are aware, then it is always a good time to remind ourselves of the following.

- Parents should talk to their children about what they are viewing online as a matter of course.
- It is really important to remain calm and non-judgmental.
- It is vital to talk to children about what they would do if they saw nasty content and who they would talk to.
- If children come across nasty content parents/carers should be curious about where they have seen it and find out if the account can be blocked. If nasty information/content is out there it is essential to report it.
- Treat 'online' interactions, content, experiences the same as 'real life'. In the same way as a parent/carer would talk to a child about their day at school, friends etc, get into the habit of having discussions about what is happening and what they are doing online.
- Support and advice can be found via school as well as organisations such as Childline.

I do hope this information is useful. Both this and the first points I made about the start and end of the school day are intended to ensure that everyone remains protected, safe and well. I thank you very sincerely for your support with this.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered on the page.

Kathleen Higgins
Executive Headteacher