



23rd October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This has been a very busy half term and your children have adapted very well to the adapted timetable and school rules. They have demonstrated positive attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour has been excellent around the school. It has been frustrating that we have not been able to have all students in school each day due to Covid, but this is likely to be a reality over the coming months. We will continue to maintain the highest standards of health and safety in order to minimise risk to staff and students.

## Open Events

Due to Covid, we were unable to invite visitors into school for Open Events this year. Instead, we created a 'virtual open event website' with filmed talks and activities. A similar website has been produced for Sixth Form. I would like to acknowledge the work of Mr Shore and all staff who were involved, but also to thank all of the students who gave up their time to participate in the department videos. Mr Shore was very keen to have a student focused event as they are our best ambassadors.

## Online safety

It is important that students are frequently reminded about staying safe online, and I know that parents often have concerns about how to support their children. There is guidance on our school website (Information – Online Safety) but you might find the following websites useful as well:

- 'Your guide to the social networks your kids use': <https://www.net-aware.org.uk>.
- The NSPCC also has valuable information <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- CEOPS – this is an organisation linked directly to the police where you can report online concerns
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

## WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a very popular application used by many people for sending messages images and videos without cost and groups can be set up easily. One concern with this is

that young people can be added to a group that includes people that they do not know, and this can put them in a vulnerable position. WhatsApp raised their age limit from **13 to 16 years of age** due to the new EU Data Protection Act (GDPR May 2018). This is because WhatsApp collects information on users and they need parental permission to do this for children under the age of 16. I would be grateful if you could please inform/remind your children about this age limit. We have been made aware that some students have been using WhatsApp to create groups linked with school. We do not condone this and will not tolerate the use of WhatsApp for groups linked with school in any way. This message will be reinforced with students after half term.

## **Opportunity for students in Years 10 - 13**

We are delighted that Eton College are again giving all of our students in Years 10-13 the opportunity to take part in one of their self-study Future Skills Programme courses for free (each course normally costs (49 pers student). Details about these courses will be shared via the Years 10 and 11 Careers Google Classrooms and the Years 12 and 13 Google classrooms. Year 10: Entrepreneurship; Year 11: Writing skills; Year 12: Research skills; Year 13: Critical thinking. All students who complete the course will receive a certificate.

## **Uniform**

The weather is likely to be more unpredictable after half term, so please ensure that your son/daughter has suitable warm clothing including a school jumper and coat that is ideally waterproof. Coats should be plain navy blue or black and be long enough to cover the school blazer. Hoodies are not allowed. Where possible, students will remain outside at break and lunch so that they can have a proper break with exercise rather than being restricted to a classroom.

## **Events/School Calendar**

This is just a reminder that we are unable to have visitors into school and this means that calendared events may be postponed or cancelled. This includes parents' evenings in school. We will produce further information regarding our plans for communication with parents in place of these valuable meetings.

I know that staff and students are looking forward to the half term break and I hope that you all enjoy this time as a family. We look forward to welcoming back year 8 and 10 students who have been unwell or self-isolating.

Wishing you God's blessing on you and your families.

Yours faithfully,



Ms. A. Waugh-Lucas,  
Headteacher