

1 July - Key Dates for September

Looking ahead to next term, here are the key dates for you to be aware of:

Monday 24th August - boarding houses open for overseas students who need 'quarantine'

Tuesday 1st September - Friday 4th September - Progress Checks for current Year 10 and Lower 6th (as they move into Year 11 and Upper 6th, but referred to in their current year group here) - more details below

Monday 7th September - Lower 6th induction Day

Tuesday 8th September - Year 9 induction Day

Tuesday 8th September - return of boarders

Wednesday 9th September - return of day pupils, lessons start

Half Term will remain as published (Friday 16th October - Sunday 1st November). If quarantine requirements remain in place, we will provide boarding over this break for anyone who needs it. End of Term will remain as published (Wednesday 16th December)

Please note that we would look at these dates again if there were a further enforced closure.

A new normal

We are planning on a return to normal in September in that we will have all (or most) students back all of the time. However, we will be taking significant steps to mitigate risk, so will be considering class sizes, cleaning routines, hand washing, face masks, temperature checks, one way systems, meal routines, large assemblies, trips off site, fixtures, visitors and more. Given the ongoing levels of uncertainty, I intend to publish our detailed strategy for reopening after reviewing the latest guidance in the middle of July. Our priorities will be safety, academic progress and the wider aspects of education, including wellbeing and social development.

Progress checks (1-4 September)

Ideally, pupils in Year 10 and Lower 6th will be in school to take these progress checks. If this is not possible, due to plans already in place, or for other reasons, please let us know, and we will make alternative arrangements, including taking the progress checks remotely. The purpose of these progress checks is for teachers to assess how well students have got on with remote learning, and inform us of any additional support that may be required, as well as helping students to get off to a really good start next year. These are not intended to provide UCAS predictions, or GCSE predictions. Progress checks will be a maximum of one hour long (Year 10) and one and a half hours long (Lower 6th). Teachers will be explaining revision needs, and revision is strictly time limited for each subject, to reduce workload and pressure around these progress checks. A schedule will be provided for revision for the week before the progress checks, but it can be spread out, or done at other times.

I know that some parents are concerned that pupils are behind where they would normally be in working towards their exams. We feel that they are in a strong position, as measured against the current national cohort, which is more relevant than comparing them against previous year groups at this stage. They can approach next year with great confidence. We may well have additional time in the working day, which can be used to provide support for individuals or groups, as some co-curricular activities might not be possible, and we will target those interventions as required. We are working on plans to provide a week of revision for those who want to take this up during the last week of the Easter holiday (12-16 April) to further support preparation for these public exams.

Chris Townsend

Headmaster