



September 10<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

## **Year 7 Update – September 10<sup>th</sup> 2021**

At the end of your child's first full week at Sydenham, we thought it might be helpful to give you a quick update specifically aimed at Year 7 parents and carers.

We've had a fabulous week; the behaviour of the year group has been exceptionally good and it's been wonderful to see students so engaged in their learning. Our first formal assembly in 18 months was a significant moment this morning, and it has been very heartening to see school functioning again as 'normal'. Ms Smart, Ms Dunham, and all our tutors, have really been impressed by how well the students are settling in.

This update includes information on the following:

1. Extra-curricular clubs
2. Home testing using lateral flow test kits and positive Covid cases
3. Slides from the Year 7 Study Skills Session
4. School Lunches
5. Parent Engage workshop for supporting wellbeing in Year 7
6. Road safety outside school
7. Class Charts and Show My Homework parent/carer accounts

### **1. Extra-curricular clubs**

The extra-curricular clubs timetable will be published next week, and sign up will take place during the week. Clubs will then begin from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September. We know our students are really excited about these activities, particularly after so many clubs were cancelled for them due to Covid in Year 6. It is our expectation that our students attend at least one club in Year 7.

If you think your child needs support with the confidence to join a club, please do not hesitate to contact your child's tutor.

### **2. Home testing using lateral flow test kits and positive Covid cases**

A return to school as 'normal' has been a further reminder of the imperative for us to continue with regular testing for Covid to ensure that transmission is reduced, and rates remain at a manageable level within the school community. Today your child has been issued with a lateral flow test kit. Students should take their tests twice per week, before school on Mondays and Thursdays. If more convenient, you can do the tests the evening before on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Please log the results with the NHS via the details in the test kit. There is no requirement to inform the school about negative results.



If your child tests positive on a lateral flow test, please contact us immediately via [covid@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:covid@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) and order a PCR test for your child. Your child and the rest of your household should self-isolate immediately. If the PCR test is taken within two days of the lateral flow test, and is negative, your child can return to school.

A small number of students in the school tested positive for coronavirus on a lateral flow test during the school tests. We've been very grateful that these families have immediately ordered PCR tests and supported the self-isolation of their child.

As will be aware, school settings are no longer required to complete contact tracing and close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts. Any identified close contacts will be contacted by Test and Trace directly.

Please be reminded that close contacts are not required to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. In order to protect the whole school community, we strongly encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

### 3. Slides from the Year 7 Study Skills Session

Thank you to all of the families who joined the Year 7 Meet the Tutor Evening and the Study Skills Event. We hope that you found the event helpful.

If you missed the presentation or would like a copy of the slides they can be found here:

[Year 7 Meet the Tutor and Study Skills Evening.](#)

### 4. School Lunches

Several families have contacted us about the length of the queues for lunch this week. Thank you to those of you who have been in touch about it. The queues are always particularly slow as Year 7 get used to the new canteen set up. However, we have shared your concerns that these have been longer than we would normally expect. Please be reassured that we have been in daily contact with our caterers who have been working on a solution. We were pleased today that they queues were much quicker.

If you have any questions about your child's Parent Pay account please contact Ms Gale at [d.gale@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:d.gale@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

### 5. ParentEngage workshop for supporting wellbeing in Year 7



Wellbeing and a good mental health is central to all that we do at Sydenham School. We regularly work with ParentEngage, an organisation in Lewisham led by local parents, to support our families with their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their child.

We will be holding a session specifically for Year 7 parents and carers with ParentEngage to focus on supporting transition. Emma Quartey, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, will also attend to share with parents and carers how the school supports the wellbeing of students and strategies to use at home.

The session will take place on **Friday 24th September 2021 via Zoom at 10am-12pm**. If you would like to attend, please complete the form via this [link](#). You will then be sent a confirmation email and a link to join the meeting.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about mental health and wellbeing, please don't hesitate to contact Ms Quartey on [e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.quartey@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

## **6. Road safety outside school**

We'd like to emphasise the message from Ms Emmanuel in the main SYD school newsletter about road safety. As those of you who have been at pick up will have noticed, it is very busy outside school at the end of the school day. Our students are excellent at moving on quickly, but we are always aware of the risk to students caused by traffic on Dartmouth Road. This risk has been compounded recently by an increase in traffic following the lifting of lockdown restrictions. A particular risk is cars that overtake the buses at the stops outside school.

We therefore have a rule that students must not cross the road outside school, and instead must use the crossings. Please do not ask your child to cross to you if you are waiting directly opposite school, and instead please ensure they use the crossing. In addition, please do not cross with your child in front of school.

Finally, please note that the road immediately across from school is private property. Please do not park down that road or by those houses when collecting your child.

## **8. Class Charts and Show My Homework parent/carer accounts**

We've been really pleased to see how many Year 7 students have been receiving praise from their teachers this week via Merits on Class Charts. Your child should have come home with access codes for your account for both Show My Homework and Class Charts. Please activate these accounts if you have not already done so. The parent/carer code can be used for more than parent in your family to access.

If you have any problems activating your account, please contact our Data Manager Martin Brooks at [m.brooks@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:m.brooks@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).

Finally, I'd like to extend my thanks to our Year 7 pastoral team, who have worked tirelessly this week to ensure school starts smoothly for your child. Two colleagues who have been slightly hidden from view but are integral to your child's journey at school are Emer O'Driscoll and Pippa Dodd. Both staff



have worked solidly for seven days in our lateral flow test centre, and we're very grateful to them for their huge support for this behind the scenes work. As many of you will know, Emer is our Senior Administration Officer and has been a key lynch-pin in the admissions process. If you have any questions about your details on our school system, please email Emer at [e.odriscoll@sydenham.lewisham.uk](mailto:e.odriscoll@sydenham.lewisham.uk). Pippa Dodd is our Year 7 Learning Mentor. She'll be out and about amongst the year group from next week, continuing her excellent work with our students (and trying to recruit as many students as possible to join her choir club).

We hope you and your family have a wonderful weekend. As always, please do not hesitate to contact your child's tutor if you have any questions or there is anything we can do to support.

Yours faithfully

Deborah Gostling

Deputy Headteacher