

5th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

With just a matter of days to go before we welcome all students back to the school site, the staff have been working hard to make the final arrangements to ensure that we can achieve a smooth transition back into classroom teaching. I would like to thank all staff for their efforts over the recent weeks and also our Governors who have carefully scrutinised our reopening plans as part of their critical friend role. The update risk assessment is now available via the school website [\[click here\]](#). For ease of use we have ensured that the most recent changes are highlighted (in green). If parents / carers have any comments related to the risk assessment, I would ask that they please contact Mrs Foster afoster@vynersschool.org.uk who will be happy to address any questions or concerns.

If parents and carers haven't already done so, I would ask that they review the letters that were sent out to families earlier this week, which outline the arrangements for Lateral Flow Testing [\[click here\]](#). As a reminder, there was a separate letter for each year group. I have also attached an update from the DfE alongside this newsletter regarding testing for parents and carers and other adults in households of school aged children.

Our pastoral team has also shared powerpoint presentations with students in each year group outlining a number of practical issues that students need to be aware of to ensure that their return is safe and effective. One key point is that students should be in **full school uniform** when arriving at school for their Lateral Flow Test. I very much appreciate that this will mean that they will be wearing their uniform for a short period of time during that day. However, we feel that it is important to recognise that the community is still in lockdown and that where children are in the community in good numbers that they should be recognisable as members of Vyners School who are participating in a school activity. I am sure that parents and carers will support us in maintaining our high standards throughout this period but if they do experience issues with regard to uniform or equipment they should contact their child's Year Leader.

I would also like to make parents and carers aware that a small number of staff will be unable to return to the school site prior to Easter for face-to-face teaching. These staff are acting on medical advice. Where teaching staff are concerned we have made alternate arrangements for the delivery of their lessons. I would ask parents and carers for a degree of understanding and support with this matter.

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Mr Gary Mullings BA (Hons)
Headteacher

Assessment Framework for Examination Grading

Although Ofqual has published its decisions on how GCSE, A level and vocational qualifications will be determined this summer, schools are still awaiting a significant amount of detail with regard to how the process will work. Senior colleagues have been working very closely with our Subject Leaders to provide as much information as possible to parents and students in Years 11 and 13 as we know that any degree of uncertainty will be unnerving. We have put together a timeline for the process, which involves a formal assessment window after the Easter break. The timetable for these assessments will be published within the coming week. It is important to note that the window has been placed at a point that gives each student the opportunity to adequately prepare, whilst allowing sufficient time for the school to mark and moderate the work prior to 18th June, which is the final submission date for all grades. It must also be stressed that final grading will be based on work that students have completed over a period of time and will not solely be determined by their final formal assessments.

LGBT+ History Month

Last week the school community celebrated LGBT+ History Month. The theme for LGBT+ History Month 2021 was 'Body, Mind, Spirit' - a celebration of the contribution of LGBT+ individuals and making sure that they are visible. Students looked at some significant individuals and groups of the LGBT+ community and their contribution to progress. Students also discussed gender identity, gender expression, biological sex and sexual orientation and explored the impact of stereotyping, whilst reinforcing the importance of being an ally and never tolerating homophobic abuse or language. Thank you to Miss Morias for developing some fantastic resources.

February Art Review

Once again, I would like to thank the Art and Photography department and congratulate all students whose exceptional work was on display in the February Art Review that was shared with families on Monday [\[click here\]](#). The work undertaken during the lockdown by all of the staff and students involved is quite remarkable and a testament to the endeavour and excellence of the staff and students at the school.

World Book Day

In celebration of World Book Day, students attended the Bishops Stortford College Literary Festival. Each year group attended a virtual session delivered by an author as an early World Book Day celebration. Students were provided with slides that introduced them to the author, as well as a Jamboard to share their reactions on. Feedback showed that students really enjoyed the Festival of Literature! Students are free to watch any of the other sessions aimed at their age group in their spare time - they have access to the videos until Easter.

Parental Consultation Evenings

Thank you to all parents and carers of students in Year 9 for their engagement with the remote Consultation Evening yesterday. I have had some very positive feedback about the process this morning. However, I do know that there were a small number of technical issues. Where such issues did occur, I will be asking staff to make alternative arrangements to contact parents as we do appreciate how important these meetings are.

The Consultation Evening for Year 8 parents and carers will take place remotely next Thursday evening. With Year 8 being an expanded year group with 240 students we do anticipate that it will be difficult for parents and carers to meet with all of their child's teachers. The fact is that in smaller departments e.g. Drama, Music, Art, etc. it is not uncommon for staff to teach across a number of teaching groups, which may involve teaching in excess of 100 children within a year group. Given this, I would ask that parents and carers seek to gain a broad range of views about their child's progress rather than seeking to meet with every teacher. Please also remember that if parents have any specific concerns about their child's progress in a subject that they can contact the Subject Teacher directly via email.

Lockdown Music Concert Update

Finally this week, it was lovely to see that the fantastic efforts of Vyners students continues to be recognised nationally. On this occasion, it was our Music students who participated in the Lockdown Project alongside a number of other schools including students from Bishop Wordsworth School in Salisbury who were the main focus of the article in the [Salisbury Journal](#). Thank you to Mr Cullum and his team for their leadership on this project and my warmest congratulations to all students involved.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend,

Yours sincerely,



Gary Mullings
Headteacher

Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. Parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles.

Tests are fast, easy and completely free. There are [different ways](#) for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home, twice-weekly:

- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees
- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- by ordering a home test kit online – please do not order online if you can access testing through other routes, this frees up home delivery for those who need it most

If you have any queries about the tests, and you live in England, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm.

Children of primary school age (and below) without symptoms are not being asked to take a test.

Testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. Getting into the habit of regular testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to protect each other.