



## Headteacher's Update

10<sup>th</sup> September 2021

I would like to officially welcome all families back to the start of the new school year and a particular warm welcome to the Year 7 cohort, many of whom attended the school site this week for the very first time. From my perspective, the removal of bubbles for the first time in over a year has meant that the school has felt far more vibrant this week. I would also add that the students have returned to school in a very positive manner with lessons feeling extremely productive.

I would like to thank all parents and students for their engagement in the mass testing programme over the past week. The on-site testing programme has been very successful and I would now encourage as many families as possible to engage with the twice weekly home testing programme. Please click [\[here\]](#) to read an important letter from Mr Cahill with an update on home testing and reporting results. I would also like to inform parents and carers that the school has not received any information about the vaccination of young people at school but I will update parents and carers if this changes,

There are a number of school events that are scheduled in the calendar this year that we have planned as face to face activities. Whilst we very much hope that all events will be able to go ahead as planned we are aware that the situation may change during the course of the year and that contingency plans may have to be activated. I am pleased to be able to report that our Open Evening will go ahead on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September with some adjustments. Details about this event will be available via the school website shortly.

Invariably, there can be issues in the early weeks of a new year and that is particularly the case when a school continues to expand. I have no doubt that families have at some point experienced the horrendous traffic that builds up in and around Ickenham during peak times, which is a result of a number of factors including the temporary closure of Breakspear Road South. As mentioned in my end of term letter in July we are aware that the overwhelming majority of students who come to Vyners live within 1.5 miles of the school, which roughly equates to a 20 minute walk. Given this, I do think that it is reasonable to expect students to walk or cycle to school and in doing so, not use the traffic as a reason for lateness. It is worth remembering that Warren Road (and surrounding roads) are used as cut throughs to the A40 at peak times so it is extremely important that we do not add to the traffic in this area at the start and end of the school day. I would also

remind any parents who do need to access the area at any time that they should not block or turn in driveways. Your support is very much appreciated.

The increasing numbers of students at the school does mean that there are also increased pressures on our resources and facilities. The catering facilities are always extremely busy in the early weeks of an autumn term and this has proved to be the case this week. I am pleased to be able to inform parents and carers that we have added an additional catering pod (located near the Music block) to our service and we are currently carefully monitoring the flow of students through the canteen to assess whether further measures such as rota systems are required.

### **Perry Parsons MBE**

During the summer break we learnt of the passing of former colleague and swing band founder, Perry Parsons MBE. Perry retired from his teaching role at Vyners in 2010 after 42 years at the school. He was appointed as a History teacher at Vyners in 1968, by the then Headmaster, Mr Best before progressing to roles as the Head of History and Head of the Lower School. However, Perry was most regarded for the creation of the Vyners Swing Band (VSB), which he led for 22 years and continued to support for many years beyond his retirement.

I am sure that most parents and carers within the school community will be aware of Perry's influence within the local community and the success of the Vyners Swing Band both home and abroad. Over time the band has raised tens of thousands of pounds for various charities and has performed at venues such as Kensington Palace, Hampton Court and the Methodist Hall, Westminster.

In 2006, Perry won the Gazette's Hero of Hillingdon award and was honoured by the Queen at Buckingham Palace with an MBE the following year. He was a truly remarkable individual who I know will be sorely missed by many within the wider community and we share our condolences with Perry's family and friends.

The school plans to celebrate Perry's life with a celebratory concert in October. We will share the details of this event in the weeks ahead.

**Gary Mullings**  
**Headteacher**