



Headteacher's Update

15th October 2021

After what has felt like another extremely positive week at school, I was shocked and saddened to learn that an incident occurred in Ickenham village yesterday evening involving knife crime and I would ask parents and carers to contact their child's Year Leader if they believe that they have been affected by these events. These sad events coincide with the personal safety week that will be taking place next week for students in Years 7 to 9 (other activities are planned for all key stages throughout the school year). Our local police liaison team will be leading a knife crime workshop for students in Year 8 on Monday and students in Year 9 on Thursday. In addition, students in Year 7 will be participating in the excellent 'Your Life, You Choose' workshops on Wednesday, which involve sessions looking at personal safety as well as drug awareness and discussions on the consequences of negative actions.

I would also like to inform all parents and carers that we will be resuming our programme of randomised safety checks after half term, which will involve the periodic unannounced use of knife arch metal detectors at the entrances to the school and the use of drugs dogs. Whilst I am aware that this strategy has caused concern to a minority of parents in the past, I would like to reassure parents that these activities are carefully planned and part of our strategy to ensure that Vyners remains a drug and knife free environment. Thank you to all parents and carers in advance for your support in this matter.

Coronavirus Update

Many parents and carers will be aware that we have signed up to the NHS service that provides a twice weekly reminder via text messaging to families regarding lateral flow testing. This reminder will only be available for those who have consented to testing. With the changes to guidance regarding self isolation for close contacts and schools no longer being required to share information with families regarding positive cases it might be easy to conclude that there are no longer positive cases within the school community. This is not the case. Additionally, even though the number of positive cases reported remains low we are aware that approximately one third of individuals with Covid will be asymptomatic. Under these circumstances it is important that we remain vigilant and the use of LFD testing is an effective measure in the fight against the spread of Covid within the school community.

Attendance

Parents may also be aware from media reports that attendance rates in secondary schools in England has been as low as 89% in recent weeks (this equates to one day of absence every two weeks on average). Interestingly, positive Covid cases only account for approximately 3% of absences. Given that this is the case it seems that some parents are (naturally) being more cautious about sending their children to school in specific circumstances, which may be as a direct or indirect result of the pandemic. As a reminder, our target overall average attendance remains at 96%. If you are unsure as to whether your child should attend school on any given day for a specific reason then please contact our Attendance Officer. Alternatively, please contact your child's Year Leader who will be happy to offer advice. I will provide parents with some additional guidance immediately after half term.

Examinations Summer 2022 Update

Ofqual and the Department for Education have published the outcome of the recent consultation on adaptations to exams in 2022, as well as outlining further information on grading in 2022 and the launch of a new consultation on contingencies. There are a number of adjustments that will be made to both GCSE and

A level subjects with the most notable change being that information will be provided in advance about the focus of the content of the exams rather than reducing the content. We have been provided with a useful summary document of the Ofqual/DFE announcements by the Confederation of School Trusts. A link to the document can be found [here](#).

Catering Issues

Parents will be aware from the media of recent difficulties in supply chains. Products are sometimes difficult to get hold of, and shortages in both fuel and HGV drivers are delaying the receipt of goods. One area which is now starting to feel the impact of this is the school canteen. Aspens, our catering partner, have informed us that they are increasingly not receiving their full food delivery. Whilst there is plenty of food in school, the difficulties in supply mean it may be necessary to change the advertised menu at short notice. We will continue to offer a range of products in the canteen for students including the nutritious main meal served during break 2; I would ask parents to be understanding of the difficulties being currently faced.

Theatre trip

The first theatre trip of the year took place on 30th September. The Y10 & Y11 Drama and Performing Arts pupils went to see The Woman in Black. The students were excited to see the piece, as they knew from the trailer that it was going to be scary and might make them jump! For some of the students this was their first ever theatre visit. Indeed from the very first loud noise of buckets being kicked over by accident, the students were in the mood for a good scare! A wonderful trip was had by all and the students can't wait to visit the theatre again, next time Performing Arts will see '& Juliet' the musical and the Drama students will see 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime'. Thank you to Mrs Moore and her colleagues for this wonderful opportunity.



Wishing you all a restful weekend.

Gary Mullings
Headteacher

Headteacher Commendations

Sophie Eves	8C	Rohit Rohanu	8C
Emily Harding	8C	Karam Sarwar	8C
Mads Kuhnel	8C	Viya Shah	8C
Izzie Lamerton	8C	Archie Silvester	8C
Olivia Megacz	8C	Lincoln So	8C
Scarlett Morris	8C	Sabrina Subeir	8C