



8th September 2023

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing to welcome all families to the start of the new academic year. Rather typically, we have returned to the type of weather that would have been far more tolerable for the children and staff in August, but this has not prevented what has been a very positive start to the new term.

We have been particularly pleased with how our new Year 7 cohort have started the term and, having spoken to many of the students, it is clear that they have enjoyed their first week. We have put in place a number of systems to ensure that the school runs smoothly with over 1,500 students and 150 staff on the site daily, including students in Year 7 and 8 lining up on the quad at the end of each break and lunch time before being escorted to their lessons. This ensures that they are able to move around the school without having to move through entrances and corridors with large numbers of students. In addition, this system, which will remain in place through to half term, will help Year 7 students to navigate the buildings.

I would like to thank parents and carers for taking the time to ensure that their children have the appropriate and well fitting uniform items for the start of the term and that they are properly equipped for learning. There are a small number of students who have started the term with incorrect uniform items and some who do not have pencil cases with appropriate equipment. I will be writing to individual families to address these issues in the coming days but I would again like to stress that we are more than happy to support families to acquire certain items where the cost of living is an issue.

As is always the case, the school buildings remained open over the summer as this is the time of year when students in Year 11 and 13 await their examination results and a significant amount of maintenance and development work is undertaken. We enjoyed a strong set of examination results at both GCSE and A level despite the Government and Ofqual's decision to adjust grading and return outcomes closer to those that were seen prior to the pandemic in 2019. Over 80% of the Year 11 cohort achieved the standard of grade 4 or higher in English and Mathematics whilst 54% of all grades at A level were achieved at the A*-B benchmark. Moving away from the statistics, it was so pleasing to see so many of our students progressing to the post-16 and post-18 destinations of their choosing. Our A level students have progressed to many of the best universities in the country including Cambridge, King's College, London and the London School of Economics as well as to excellent apprenticeships and employment opportunities. Our Sixth Form remains a popular destination; we have started the year with over 140 students in Year 12.

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I am delighted to be able to report that the project to refurbish the main boys toilets in the older main block is now completed and that all toilets are at a very high standard. These toilets have been fitted with automatic toilet flushing and automatic taps (to reduce water consumption) and we are now hopeful that all students treat the toilets with the respect that they deserve and that they are left after use as they would wish to find them.

There were a number of other projects that took place over the summer but the most notable from a teaching and learning perspective was the installation of brand new computers in rooms 068, 156, 157 and 158. This was a significant piece of work that was undertaken by the IT Network team, which we know will benefit the students greatly. I would also like to mention our facilities team, led by Louis Clark, who have worked doggedly throughout the summer to ensure that the school is safe and well maintained ready for the start of the new term. A significant amount of their time was invested in upgrading hundreds of lights to LED fittings, thus taking a further step to reduce the carbon footprint of the school.

The school calendar has been updated for the academic year and all significant events have now been added. The calendar can be found in the Parent Zone. A link can be found [\[here\]](#). There are some events that I would like to highlight at this stage. These are as follows:

Wednesday 13 th September	Year 7 and 8 Co-curricular Fayre (3-3.30pm)
Wednesday 20 th September	Whole School Photograph (sessions 1 & 2)
Thursday 21 st September	Year 7 Parent Information/Cheese & Wine Evening (6-7pm)
Wednesday 27 th September	Open Evening (early closure)

The co-curricular fayre is an opportunity for all students in the year 7 and 8 cohorts to see what is on offer in the way of after school clubs. As a reminder, the expectation at Vyners is for all students to participate in at least one co-curricular activity per year. Parents will wish to note that we have scheduled a whole school photo to take place on 20th September (weather permitting). Those that have seen the photos next to school reception will know that these photos have become an important Vyners tradition; the vast majority of students who have attended the school since it opened in 1960 can be found in one or more of the photos. Our Business Manager, Miss Williams, will be contacting those parents next week who have not consented to their child being in public photos. Whilst we encourage as many students as possible to take part, it remains a parental decision as to whether a child is included.

Can I also draw the attention of Year 7 parents to the parent information / cheese and wine evening which will be held later this term. Full attendance would be greatly appreciated. It's a great opportunity to meet other parents within the cohort, learn about your child's first weeks of the term as well as important information about the year ahead. We will write to parents separately about each of the events in the coming days.

Safeguarding Snapshot

Ms Ashe has asked me to inform all parents and carers that she will be sharing a safeguarding snapshot with parents on a weekly basis. The aim of the snapshot is to provide useful and additional information that will help parents to be more informed about ways to safeguard their child. The snapshot will be sent out weekly either via Headteacher's or Year Leaders' updates and are saved on the school website in the Parent Zone / Safeguarding Snapshots. This week's snapshot is on live streaming and can be found [\[here\]](#)

I would also like to remind parents and carers that children should not be on site before 7.45am in the morning unless they have been invited for an intervention or enrichment activity. Whilst we appreciate that it is convenient for some parents to drop their child off early whilst travelling to work, we cannot take responsibility for children on site before this time. Furthermore, some children are engaging in dangerous behaviours, walking through the vehicle gates prior to the pedestrian gates opening at 7.45am. Students may be dropped off prior to 7.45am but they must wait outside of the boundary until the pedestrian gates open.

We will also be continuing to engage in the School Travel and Road Safety (STARS) programme this year, which aims to significantly increase sustainable travel to and from school whilst improving the road safety in the areas close to schools. I would again stress the importance of avoiding Warren Road during the time immediately before and after school and that those parents and carers who decide to use Warren Road at this times do so courteously ensuring that they do not park across driveways or mount grass verges, avoid u-turns and do not stop in the middle of the road to either drop off or pick up their child.

Finally, please could I ask parents and carers to encourage their children to be organised and ensure they bring the correct equipment to school each day. The Office staff have been inundated with parents bringing items into school that their children have forgotten, such as PE kits, home learning, books, etc.

Thank you to all parents and carers in advance for their support this year. We look forward to another successful year at Vyners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Mullings', written in a cursive style.

Gary Mullings
Headteacher