

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Friday 16 July 2021

Dear Parents/carers

Next year will be a good year

The end of this academic year is approaching; it has been very different to any other.

Like everyone else across the world, Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College have learned to work in new ways because of the pandemic. Do any of us truly understand the complex impact that the last eighteen months has had on humankind and how long it will take our world to recover from it? So many people yearn for things to return to normal and I hope that with the government's confirmation this week that England moves to Step 4 from Monday 19 July, the summer will indeed bring some movement in the direction of normality.

Invoking the optimism of Captain Sir Tom Moore, whose phrase "*tomorrow will be a good day*" inspired so many last year, dare I suggest that "*next year will be a good year*" might be a clarion call as we look forward to both the holiday and then the new academic year.

Whilst everybody in the school and college community desperately needs a holiday like everyone else, I am aware that for many, their holidays this year will be very different to the ones they might have planned in previous years. I hope that whatever your family's plans are over the summer you are able to spend time together and looking forward with Captain Tom's optimism.

Contact Tracing

In respect of the move to Step 4, from Monday 19 July close contacts will be identified via the NHS Test and Trace scheme and schools and colleges will no longer be involved in the process. On everyone's behalf I should like to thank all the staff at the College and the School who have been involved in Contact Tracing over many months. It has been an enormous task they have completed and involved many, many hours of work, often late at night and at the weekend. Dr Mackay and Mrs McMorn have played the biggest part in this work and have been superbly supported by Mrs McMenemy, Mr Detheridge and lots of other staff.

Lateral Flow Device Testing throughout the summer

During the summer holidays, we want all our pupils and students to continue taking their twice weekly Lateral Flow Device Tests. All our pupils and students have been given testing kits to enable them to do this through the summer. When you need to request further kits, and you are likely to need to do so by the of August, you should contact the NHS.

Updated Government guidance – July 2021

New guidance has been issued in respect of how schools and colleges should operate from August 2021 in light of the move to Step 4 of the roadmap out of Covid.

If you would like to read the full guidance yourself, here is a link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999689/Schools_guidance_Step_4_update_FINAL.pdf

This guidance highlights the need for all secondary pupils to receive two on site lateral flow tests prior to returning to school/college.

Page 10 of the guidance states

*As pupils will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, all secondary school pupils should receive 2 **on-site** lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the autumn term. Settings may commence testing from 3 working days before the start of term and can stagger return of pupils across the first week to manage this. Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.*

Guidance can and has often changed during the course of the pandemic, sometimes at short notice. Therefore, the plan the Trust is developing is provisional: based on two-tests being completed in the week starting **Monday 30 August**. You will appreciate that until we have a firm and final plan we are having to build in some flexibility in respect to the start of the autumn term. **Therefore, we will send a separate letter to confirm the plans for LFD testing and other arrangements for the start of the autumn term on Monday 16 August.**

GCSE, BTEC and A level results

If you have a child who is due to receive A level, GCSE or BTEC results in August, a separate letter will be sent with more information about how results will be issued. You should already know that results will be published earlier in 2021 than usual with A levels due to be released on Tuesday 10 August and GCSE on Thursday 12 August.

Timing of the school/college day

We have concluded that it is sensible to plan for a return to a 3 pm finish at the school/college from September.

We have informed the Local Authority School Transport teams of this decision and expect the change to start from the beginning of the autumn term. Therefore, if you collect your child from Wootton Upper School or from Kimberley College, please bear this mind for September. For the safety of all, we ask that Wootton Upper School parents/carers allow the buses to leave at 3.10pm before coming on to site to collect pupils.

We are still finalizing details around other aspects of the school/college day but we expect to increase the length of the lunch break from the current twenty-minutes to thirty-minutes whilst keeping morning break twenty-minutes in length. We believe this will give sufficient time for everybody to eat their packed lunches or food purchased at school or college. For your information, we have a new catering provider from September 1, namely Caterlink. The current catering staff will transfer to the new contractor. On your behalf, I express my thanks to our current provider, *Elior* [Taylor Shaw] who have worked with the Trust for six years. One of the longest serving members of the catering team staff, Mrs Kath York, has decided now is the right time to retire and I would like to record my sincere thanks to her for the many years she has worked so hard providing meals to pupils and staff. I hope Kath enjoys a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Local Governing Board [LGB] Vacancies

From September, the number of parent governors on each Wootton Academy Trust LGB increases from four to six. In this letter, I want to draw this to your attention and to encourage you to give very serious thought to putting your name forward when nominations are sought in September.

In September there will be vacancies for **three** parent governors on the Wootton Upper School Local Governing Board [*a fourth vacancy will become available at the end of November 2021*]. There will be **two** vacancies on the Kimberley College Local Governing Board [*two more vacancies become available in November 2021*].

Thank you to governors who are standing down or changing their roles on our LGBs

Sally Knight ceased to be a parent governor when her term of office on the Wootton Upper School ended. Sally fulfilled a really important role as the LGB's Safeguarding Governor. The LGB was keen not to lose Sally's expertise and therefore, asked her to continue as an appointed governor. The LGB is delighted that Sally agreed to become an appointed governor. Thank you.

Rachel Palmer has also stood down from her role as a parent governor. The LGB thanked Rachel for her service at its last meeting and wished her much success in the future. Thank you.

Esra Hassan has submitted her resignation as a staff governor as she will be leaving the Trust in September to start a PhD course. Thank you.

Governors play an important role in challenging [and supporting] executive leaders to secure improvement and therefore, we are very keen to have a full complement of parent [and staff] governors in place as soon as possible. In the first instance, if you are interested in putting yourself forward for nomination, please do contact me for more information.

Timetable

One of the most complicated tasks in any educational setting is completing the timetable; over the last five months, Mr Freemantle has been working tirelessly to produce next year's timetable seeking to maximise the requests of countless pupils and students in respect of option choices and ensuring that the right staff are available at the right time.

It is a huge challenge and we are very fortunate that Mr Freemantle has such skill in being able to produce a timetable that works across the school and the college allowing time for staff to travel between the two settings. Mr Freemantle is now in the final stage of checking everyone's timetable. Pupils in Year 9 and Year 10 in 2021 – 2022 have already been told what option subjects they have been allocated.

We plan to issue timetables to all pupils and students before they return to school/college when they come in for their first on-site LFD test at the end of the summer holiday.

Staff farewells

At the end of every academic year, we say farewell to staff moving on to new challenges both within and beyond school/college settings. At our staff meeting on Monday I was able to thank all of the staff moving to new roles elsewhere. Our collective thanks go to the following teachers: Mrs Beamish, Mrs Clarke-Wright, Mr Domingo, Ms Frankish, Mrs Gaishouser, Mr Hancox, Mr Hooper, Mr Mercer, Ms Moon, Mrs Mutimer, Ms G Smith, Mrs Stewart, Mr Stockdale, Mrs Strickland, Mrs Wehden and Miss Stockton, Mr Uzoechi and Mr Wade who are leaving the Trust having taught at Kimberley College and/or Wootton Upper School.

We say farewell too, to members of the support staff who are moving on to new challenges: Mrs Cain, Mr Hance, Mrs Hassan, Mr Malciw, Mrs Morrow, Mr J. Spratt, Miss L. Spratt and Mrs Perchinelli.

Every individual makes a difference to the lives of some pupils and students in our school and college community; it is not necessarily how long you spend working in a school/college that matters but what you achieve. Three colleagues leaving this term have each taught at the Trust for twenty years or more, namely Mrs Strickland, Mrs Stewart and Mrs Gaishouser. I know that parents/carers will want to join with me in saying an especial thank you to these highly valued colleagues for everything they have done during their time at the Trust.

I hope you share my optimism that next year will be a better year. Thank you all for your support.

Yours sincerely



M. Gleeson

Executive Principal

Wootton Academy Trust

Wootton Academy Trust operates:
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