

21 May 2021

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Dear Parents

As we approach the last week of this half term and with lockdown restrictions easing I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to bring some important information to your attention.

Firstly, I am pleased to inform you that the Year 8 pupil who had the positive lateral flow test earlier in the week, has now received a negative PCR test and they and the other children who were self-isolating have been able to return to school. I'd like to reiterate the importance of the twice weekly lateral flow testing that you are doing, it really is critical in helping us to keep our community safe and in school.

You will have noticed I hope that since Monday 8 March we have made every effort to ensure as 'normal' as possible return to school life for the children, including the provision of co-curricular sport and clubs. We can already see the benefit of this amongst our pupils and their wellbeing, following such an extended period of lockdown and restrictions. The next major step we are planning is to return to our Vertical Tutoring structure, hopefully before the end of this term for the current Year 7 to 10 pupils, which we know will have a positive impact on wider school relationships and healthy role modelling.

Whilst there is lots to feel optimistic about as lockdown restrictions ease, we would like to alert all of our parents to some concerns about unsafe behaviours and poor decision-making amongst pupils that have come to the forefront this term or may arise now that restrictions are easing. We would like to prevent any further escalation of these with your support.

TikTok

We have had reports that a number of pupils are recording videos in school and posting them on the TikTok app. Some of these videos we believe have been taken in the changing rooms or on the school buses. We are very specific in our rule that mobile devices should be switched off and out of sight between 8.30am and 3.45pm each day and at no time are pupils allowed to take images of the Princethorpe community including staff or pupils while on the school site including buses. We have this rule to reduce the risk of bullying and to prevent issues of safeguarding. We would advise all parents to remain vigilant on their child's use of social media and to ensure that their mobile phone is used safely.

Social Media and Mental Health

It has come to our attention that some pupils are accessing inappropriate sexualised images using their phones. These images are being passed around using social media. We know from our recent training on the impact of pornography on mental health of the serious effect viewing these images can have on a young person's, self-esteem and their understanding of positive relationships. These images and videos may be viewed on gaming sites as well as social media apps such as Instagram and TikTok, and we advise again that you talk to your child about the risks of using these apps and to regularly check their social media use.

Senior School (11-18 years) at Princethorpe College

Junior School (4-11 years) at Crescent School

Junior School and Little Crackers Nursery (2-11 years) at Crackley Hall

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Screen Time Management

Whilst there are many positive aspects to our increasingly digital world, we are concerned about our pupils' e-safety and screen time management, particularly in light of the enforced lockdowns and extra reliance we all have on IT. You may like to read again our Ten Top Tips for Parents Regarding E-Safety and Screen Time Management, attached for your reference.

Parties

For obvious reasons it has been a while since we have felt the need to alert our parents to the pitfalls of parties and while I am sure everyone is enthusiastic about the social opportunities the latest guidelines now allow us we would like to urge some caution and a measured approach if your child is hosting a party.

Whilst some parties hosted by pupils will be well organised with the support of parents, others will not be and will have little or no parental involvement.

Of particular concern is pupils drinking alcohol, often both before and during the party, parents supplying alcohol to pupils during the party and parents not being present to supervise the event. **In the past there have also been occasions before a party, where pupils have brought alcohol or other banned substances including vape pens into school. Please be aware that this would result in a suspension or expulsion.**

In some cases, the consumption of alcohol at parties has led to further inappropriate and unsafe behaviours which have had a serious long-term effect on the individuals concerned.

We do cover the issues raised here with the pupils in school and whilst our REAL TIME classes and pastoral programmes do educate our pupils in these matters we would really appreciate your support in this matter and keeping all our pupils safe. **We absolutely discourage the organisation of any large-scale parties, unless parents are certain they can be effectively controlled and safe for all the pupils attending.** We would also ask you to talk to your sons and daughters about the way they behave if they go out and be very clear of your expectations of them.

If you have any specific or more general concerns about the issues raised here, please do contact either your son or daughter's Head of House or Mrs Sharpe, our Pastoral Deputy.

Many thanks for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

E D Hester

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