

16 August 2021

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Dear Parents

I hope that you and your families are well and have been able to enjoy the summer break.

Although we realise there is some way to go, we are very much hoping that the impact of COVID will be much reduced this coming term and so I have great pleasure in enclosing the Michaelmas Term 2021 Calendar. It includes details and timings of our co-curricular programme, trip information, parents' evenings and the like. The calendar for the complete school year, which will include any updates and revisions, can be found on My School Portal under the "School Information" link. If you need any help accessing the portal, please email louiseeaton@princethorpe.co.uk.

I also enclose a copy of the 30th bumper edition of *The Pinnacle*, which is once again filled with outstanding work by pupils from across the Foundation schools.

Getting Prepared for the Term Ahead

In planning for the term ahead, we want to try to ensure that we all get back into good routines and habits. In order to help parents and pupils we have revised and updated the ***Princethorpe Information Booklet for Parents and Pupils*** and both current and new parents will find a copy of the 2021-2022 edition enclosed. We would ask that you and your children do read this carefully and particularly would like to draw your attention to the following sections:

- Uniform and Sixth Form Dress Code
- Attendance
- Behaviour guidelines
- Use of social media and mobile telephones

Pupil Systems and Organisation.

Before the start of term, it is very helpful if parents run through the systems that their children have to aid their general organisation and give them any support they need to get strong, workable systems in place. Please impress upon your child the importance of taking responsibility for their organisation and looking after their own belongings as well as respecting those items belonging to others.

It is extremely important that all items are clearly labelled and named as mislaid bags and lost uniform can take up an immense amount of time in the school day. Please note that the College cannot take any responsibility for bags or belongings that are left outside the school buildings in the evenings or at weekends. Please ensure your child has all the equipment they need to support their learning. There is a recommended list in the *Information Booklet for Parents and Pupils*.

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

COVID Related Preparation and Expectations for the term ahead

As you will be aware, many of the restrictions that were put in place during the last academic year have been removed. Full details of the current guidance can be found in the DfE's Schools' COVID Operational Guidance and I have given some detail of how this new guidance will impact us below – the usual caveat being that the guidance could well change at short notice.

Lateral Flow Testing for Pupils on their return to school starts from 31 August

As you will be aware, the incidence of COVID is very high amongst the teenage population at present. In order to minimise the risk of a significant outbreak in school and possible enforced pupil isolation or even school closure, Government guidance is as follows:

“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.”

This lateral flow testing will be key for us in minimising the risk of infection spreading in school. **We are aiming to perform the first test BEFORE the start of term from Tuesday 31 August to Saturday 4 September** with the second test during the first week in school. We plan to test Year 7 and the Lower Sixth during their Induction Day on Friday 3 September and will send out a full timetable for the pre-term testing programme in the next week or so.

Pupils should then continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

Vertical Tutoring

With the removal of the need to “bubble” pupils, we are delighted to be able to return to our Vertical House Tutor Groups for Years 7 to 11 from the start of the term – pupils should now be aware who their new tutor is.

Changes to self-isolation requirements

There are significant changes to the rules here as follows:

“From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

18-year-olds will be treated in the same way as children until 4 months after their 18th birthday, to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated. At which point, they will be subject to the same rules as adults and so if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.”

The third paragraph is relevant to our Sixth Form and we have now learnt that the government's plan to vaccinate 16- and 17-year-olds is to begin shortly, which will help further.

It is also worth noting that if there were a significant number of positive cases in school, the requirement to self-isolate could be re-introduced.

Face coverings

These will generally no longer be required for pupils, staff and visitors, either in classrooms or in communal areas. However, there are some circumstances where face masks will be needed, including on the school buses:

“The government has removed the requirement to wear face coverings in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don’t normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.”

Other Control Measures

We will, of course, be continuing to insist on good hand hygiene and hand sanitising must still take place regularly during the day for pupils and staff including before leaving for school.

Our enhanced cleaning regimes and maintaining good ventilation throughout the school will also continue.

I will write again to all parents before the start of the term, but if you have any queries at this stage, please do get in touch with us directly by emailing post@princethorpe.co.uk.

With best wishes to all families,

Yours sincerely

Edna D Hester.