



17 September 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Two weeks into the term already, where has the time gone?! It's been a superb start to the year with students settling back quickly into school routines. I walk round the school constantly and classes are quiet, focussed and highly productive. After a very difficult year, it's great to see things back to something more normal.

We have lots of plans this year to further improve the school and have already introduced a number of new initiatives:

- We have a new behaviour policy which is working well; providing a clear behaviour framework for staff and students
- Our new deputy head – Matilde Warden – has been meeting our Heads of Faculty to work on the curriculum planning for the Covid recovery
- We have a new student educational database system – Cloud School – which is significantly better than ePortal and has a great new app for parents which we will be launching later this term
- We are introducing some one-way systems to some busy parts of the school to ease the flow of students at lesson changeover
- Our SEND team have been improving all aspects of our SEND provision over the last few months and have even more plans for this term

We have been very busy already and there is a real sense of excitement about our school improvement work after a year restricted by the pandemic.

## **Vaccinations**

As you may be aware, the Government has announced that students aged 12 to 15 will be able to choose to receive the first dose of the Covid 19 vaccination later on this term. Like the adult vaccination programme, this is entirely optional and will be delivered by the School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) in the same way as other vaccinations they carry out in school. Currently we are expecting these vaccinations to be carried out in mid to late October. The full details with consent information will be sent out to families in the next week or two.

As a school we cannot offer medical advice on this topic but would encourage any families unsure about this vaccine programme to speak to appropriate medical professionals.

## **Beacon of Hope Award**

In the summer, we were absolutely delighted that Alison Bond, our Family Support worker, was recognised for her hard work during the Covid-19 situation, by receiving a Derbyshire Beacon of Hope award. This award was created by Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and their Leaders, the High Sheriff and the Lord-Lieutenant. Alison was a huge support to some of our families in a variety of ways. Alison nominated 20 families for a Christmas Food Hamper from Morrison's Supermarket in Belper and ensured 18 of our families received the Back to School cash grants that were available during the Covid pandemic. She then stayed in contact with these

families, particularly over the pre-Christmas period, to ensure they were going to manage with food, heating/lighting, and finances, sourcing assistance when necessary.

She also organised a collection from students and staff for the Belper Food Hub, which was handed over in January for the benefit of struggling families in Belper. This included organising and collating the collection and delivery of toiletries and enough food to feed an estimated 50 families for 3-4 days.

Additionally she also organised a collection of crisp packets via The Crisp Packet Project to be made into foil blankets and "bivvy" bags to be distributed to homeless people living on the streets locally. Students collected over 1100 crisp packets in total.

Alison continues to work hard to support our students and families, both at Belper School and our family of Primary schools, and she is already planning future projects to help others.

We are proud of the work Alison does on a daily basis as a member of our Student Wellbeing Team.

### **Year 13 'Period 6' Catch Up Sessions**

During the Autumn Term we are offering extra support for Year 13 students who have had disrupted learning during lockdown. Most subjects will be delivering additional 'catch up' lessons after school from 3.10pm to 4.00pm called "Period 6". For most subjects these will run throughout the Autumn Term.

Although these sessions can never replace the face-to-face learning time that we have lost, they will help address some of the gaps that have affected some students and will help prepare them for their next steps. All students can attend, and all can benefit. Though these sessions are not compulsory, we do feel that they are an important and valuable addition to what we can offer our students. Teachers are currently inviting students to attend catch up sessions. Students can attend more than one subject. Please talk to your son/daughter about this so that you know which days they may be late home.

### **Home testing kits**

When students attended for their second 'return to school' lateral flow test, they were given two boxes of home test kits. This is to enable them to continue testing twice-weekly until the end of September in line with DfE guidance. We will let parents/carers know as soon as we hear if testing is to continue beyond this point. Students who did not attend for school testing can still obtain home test kits by coming to Student Reception. They will need to sign for the kits for our records.

### **School transport bus passes**

School bus passes are administered and issued by Derbyshire County Council. Should a student lose their pass, they can order a replacement by coming to Student Reception and paying the £5 replacement pass fee. Once the fee has been paid, we can issue a temporary bus pass which the student can use until their replacement pass is received from Derbyshire County Council. Please note that we are unable to issue temporary passes without the £5 replacement fee being paid in advance.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

With my very best wishes,



**Nick Goforth, Headteacher**