

# PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

12th February 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is just a brief newsletter from me to round up the end of another extraordinary half term, and to say thank you for all you have done to support our young people and for your support of school staff during this time.

## PARENT SURVEY

Thank you to the 117 families who completed this survey. This is a tremendous response and really helps us to understand if and how provision needs adjusting in any way. The headline is overwhelmingly positive: the vast majority of families are satisfied with provision. The statistical responses can be found [here](#).

As always, the comments were helpful and often reveal more than the more statistical questions. As a result, and slightly depending on what may (or may not) be announced about the return to school (more below) we will action the following:

- Academic staff will end scheduled lessons 5 minutes before the appointed time to allow for a slight breather between lessons (as there would be in school). This has already begun.

- For Years 9 and below, teachers will no longer set formal homework (there were many concerns about this from parents) but rather incorporate more individual tasks within lessons
- Reduce screen time by including more individual tasks within lessons that can be completed off-screen; introduce “screen-free” times (details to be decided, but perhaps an afternoon every couple of weeks) during which activity is suggested to encourage students to undertake something more active and get outside in daylight (another significant concern of many)
- Introduce regular virtual performance opportunities via

Purcell Online including weekly lunchtime recitals

- Find opportunities for more duo, ensemble and chamber music playing
- Assuming we can engage relevant artists, organise masterclasses in the areas which have yet to have them
- Houses will look to arrange more social activity (difficult to achieve whilst also reducing screen-time but we will do our best)

Where further individual support was indicated and those students were identified in the survey, we will follow these up individually to see how we can help further.



## THE RETURN TO SCHOOL?

We are anticipating a significant announcement from Government on February 22nd which we hope will outline a timeline for the return to face-to-face learning. I feel I have been pretty good at predicting the line of travel from last March onwards, but this one is simply too difficult to call! I suspect we will see **some** students return before Easter, but I would be astonished if it were all. But

we're ready for anything – whether that's a complete return, a mixed economy or a continuation of the current situation – so you can rest assured that we can act quickly and flexibly whatever is announced. **I would still advise against making any travel arrangements until that announcement is made on February 22nd.** Whatever is announced, I will

endeavour to publish a Parent Newsletter on Tuesday 23rd outlining our response. If the announcement leaves you with specific questions, I would ask that you please avoid sending them in until after I have had a chance to circulate that Newsletter (which may well address those queries). We can only wait to see ...

## SUMMER EXAMS (OR LACK THEREOF)

I know that Year 11 and Year 13 will be anxious to know exactly how they will be assessed in the summer. We are also expecting this to be announced around February 22<sup>nd</sup> (or quite possibly a little before). Our advice to all those

in exam years is to assume that every piece of work undertaken may be used as evidence. All work is therefore important and should be completed to the very best of their ability. As soon as we know more, we will ensure

both students and parents are fully aware.

## FEES

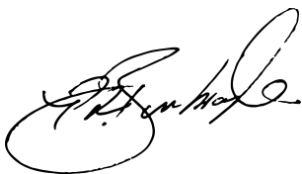
I know that some parents are keen to hear news from the governing body on the issue of fees. I have no further news at present except to say that there is to be a meeting of Governors a few days after the forthcoming Government announcement at which fees will be discussed.

Furthermore, just a few days ago we were informed by the Department for Education that any proposal to adjust the parental contributions of MDS funded places had to be approved by them in advance of notifying parents, and this may impact on the timing of any announcement. As the

Chair of Governors has already said to you, any adjustment would be applied to the invoices for the summer term.

I hope you are able to enjoy some family time over the half term period and I look forward to being in touch in the first week back.

With all good wishes,



Paul Bambrough  
Principal