

# PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

2nd July 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

What a year! There are almost no words left to adequately describe the ups and downs of the past 18 months. We've lived through a tremendously fractured time characterised by constantly changing circumstances – often at little notice – and more compromises to our day-to-day experience than any of us feels comfortable accepting. And yet, despite this, our students have continued to surprise and delight with their remarkable achievements and, in general, their positive and optimistic attitude has carried us through. If this period has taught us anything, it has taught us that we can never take the presence of live music for granted and it has underlined just how vital and important it is to our overall wellbeing. Our return to live concert making over the latter part of this term has simply reinforced this and it has been such a thrill to see our young musicians back on the concert platform playing in front of real people once again. At the time of writing, we have no idea what restrictions (if any) we may return to in September, but we are cautiously hopeful that we may be able to operate more normally. Thank you for your support during these challenging times – it has been much appreciated.

## Catering

Over the past couple of years both students and parents have consistently expressed concerns about the quality of food. As you may be aware, the School sub-contracts out our catering provision. I write to inform you that we have taken these concerns seriously

and as a result have engaged a new catering provider to take over the provision from September. We are confident that students will notice a significant improvement when they return next year. The new company will engage with students and parents on a

regular basis to ensure they are providing the range and quality of food we expect.

## Consultation on School Reports

I would also welcome your views on how we report on progress throughout the year and we will be issuing a short survey over the summer (post-results) to canvass views on the

frequency, format and content of progress reporting. There will also be some broader questions on the ease and method of school interactions/communication and how we

might improve the way in which information is shared with you. I hope that you will feel able to take part when the time comes.

## Director of Boarding

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Lady Kate Cayley as our new Director of Boarding from September 1st. Lady Cayley has many years' experience in the leadership of boarding and in the context of this enhanced role, she will have cause to be in contact with you regularly. With that in mind, she has written the following by way of introduction:

*"I am thrilled and excited to be joining The Purcell School, as Director of Boarding, in September. On each of my visits to the school thus far I have had the opportunity to meet different groups of students and have been so impressed by their maturity, commitment to the school*

*and, of course, their passion for music. I am very much looking forward to getting to know the students more closely and working with them, and the House teams who support them, to ensure that the boarding experience is the best that it can be.*

*I have worked in boarding education for over thirty years. Having first taken on pastoral responsibility as a Resident Tutor, I then led a boarding house for 11 years and have been a Deputy Head leading boarding and pastoral care for over fifteen years. While bringing this extensive experience, I am also looking forward to learning more about this wonderful school and the unique education it*

*provides for such talented young people.*

*I believe strongly that the boarding environment, despite its inevitable compromises, can deliver wonderful opportunities for students to thrive, including developing individual skills and personal qualities which help to build strong, happy, inclusive communities based on compassion and respect for one another. Boarding at The Purcell School will, I hope, genuinely enhance the overall education experience for students, allowing them to aspire academically, grow and learn safely as young people and musically fly!"*

## Relationship and Sex Education

All schools are required to review and update their policies and teaching on RSE and there are now new statutory requirements in place (although their implementation has been allowed to be delayed where schools have experienced significant Covid-19 disruption). We will be publishing a new draft policy towards the beginning of the new academic year and will circulate this to parents at that time along with an opportunity for you to comment on the content. An overview of the requirements set out by

Government can be found [here](#).

We are currently taking advice and guidance from various external advisors on best practice in this area and as we formulate the new policy, we would welcome any initial thoughts you may have about approaches to this area of the curriculum. This is not the time to submit requests for withdrawal from those non-compulsory elements – this will come later – but rather, if you have thoughts in general terms about the approach the School might take, this is

the time to share them. We will consider these when building the new policy and will circulate this prior to the beginning of the new year and invite any specific comments on the draft policy at that time.

If you have a views you wish to share at this stage, do please send them to:

**PSHE@purcell-school.org.**

## Lateral Flow Testing

We are offering students on site today to pick up one box of lateral flow tests if they are returning next term. We have not yet been informed by the Department for Education

on testing requirements for our September start, but are assuming this may include the need to take a lateral flow test before returning to site. We will send out further guidance as

and when we are in possession of this over the summer term.

Please note that you can also obtain lateral flow tests for free through this [link](#).

## Return to School Arrangements

Following Lady Cayley's appointment and further discussion, we have made some minor changes to the timings of our return to school

in September. This is to allow more time for parents (both new and existing) to meet staff and to allow more time for student social/settling-in

activity.

The new programme can be found on the website [here](#).

## Goodbyes ...

As is always the case at this time of year, a number of staff will be leaving us. Whether they have been with us for one year or many, I am deeply grateful for all they have contributed in their time here and wish them the very best in the future. We say goodbye to the following people (in alphabetical order):

- Nikki Bennett (Counsellor)
- William Brickell (Residential Sports Graduate)
- Romain Francois (Assistant Houseparent)
- Liam Jones (Residential Sports Graduate)
- Andrew Leverton (Head of English)
- Jane Malan (Head of Boarding)
- Chloe Miller (Residential Practice Supervisor)
- Joseph Phipps (Composition Tutor)
- Chris Rayfield (Deputy Principal)
- Jessamy Robinson (Residential Practice Supervisor)
- Ryan Rogers (Drama)
- Robin Williamson (Residential Practice Supervisor)
- Dot Withers (Teacher of Biology/Science)

To all those students and families who are moving on this year: thank you for all you have contributed and for all the joy you have brought us in your time here. It has been a privilege to be a small part of your life-journey and I hope you will remain in touch in forthcoming years. We are proud of all you have achieved (in very difficult circumstances) and look forward to watching your careers prosper in the coming years.

With all good wishes for a restful summer,



Paul Bambrough  
Principal

