

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

18th March 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am sure that many of you are as concerned and distressed by the current conflict in Ukraine as we have been here. As a truly international school that seeks to embrace difference and diversity as a positive and enriching gift, we have been encouraging students to be mindful of how others might feel about current events – especially those from both Ukraine and Russia who will have worries and concerns for friends and family. We have been underlining the importance of tolerance and understanding and trying to live together with a greater spirit of kindness. And of course we have discussed how music and art can play its part in providing comfort at such times. Support is always available to those who wish to talk and any member of staff can offer a listening ear to those who need it. If you have any concerns about how your daughter or son might currently feel about world events, please let us know via Houses or their tutor.

Covid-19 Update

As you will be aware, we have been experiencing another significant spike and have been operating under outbreak control measures for some time. The numbers are now (at last) beginning to fall again but it is unlikely we will make any changes to current measures

before the end of term. With a number of important events looming, we do not want to take any chances! I want to take this opportunity to thank all parents and guardians for their incredible support when students have tested positive or shown symptoms. In all

cases you have willingly and promptly collected students to enable them to recover at home and thus protect the rest of the school community. We are extremely grateful to have this level of support.

Online Meeting with the Principal

We plan to hold our second parent engagement meeting next week on Thursday 24th March at 18.00 until 19.00. This is an opportunity for any parents who would like to meet informally with me to ask questions or open a discussion. There is no compulsion to attend and I will not be making any specific

announcements, but the session is offered for those who would find it useful, helpful or desirable to meet. As I have said previously, it's not an opportunity to discuss individual concerns, but rather an opportunity to answer questions and receive suggestions. I was pleased to be able to action a number

of suggestions from the first meeting almost immediately. Details of how to register are available [here](#).

Staff News

It has been a very, very difficult time managing staff absence and we are painfully aware of the impact such absence has. We have done everything we can to minimise the impact but have to acknowledge that this has not always been easy. I am grateful to Mr Andrew Williams who has taken on the administration and management of Academic Music for a short time and this has brought stability to this area, and am delighted

that Mr Edward Longstaff has generously offered to break out of his sabbatical year, in a part time capacity, to support Year 13, in particular.

In other news, I am delighted that Head of English, Mr Michael Long, has been appointed our new Director of Teaching and Learning (the first time the School has had such a role) and will take over leadership of the academic programmes from

1st April. He will not be leaving or cutting down his work in English – but his new role will seek to develop and improve further the academic life of the School. As usual, if you have questions about academic matters please continue to direct these to tutors and if your questions or concerns remain unaddressed, do please contact Mr Long.

Requesting Absence

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the School's absence policy, particularly in light of forthcoming absences for BBC Young Musician auditions, consultation lessons and other

events. Parents must email studentabsence@purcell-school.org at least **2 weeks prior to the event** in order for permission to be sought and any internal commitments and instrumental lessons to

be rearranged where possible. Whilst we appreciate that 2 weeks' notice may not always be possible, we may be unable to authorise these requests if they do not arrive in good time.

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

As you will be aware, RSE is delivered in school via the PSHE programme supported (where appropriate) by other subject areas and additional targeted sessions. On Friday 25th March the normal school timetable will be adjusted to enable year groups to attend age-appropriate sessions with www.ithappens.education

a specialist provider of RSE in schools. The focus will be on managing healthy relationships which will complement the School's current focus on respect and consent. Years 7 and 8 will meet together; Years 9 and 10 (with a focus on digital relationships); Years 11 & 12 and then Year 13 separately

(with an emphasis on managing relationships in the next stage of their education beyond Purcell). These will be important and valuable sessions, led by experienced experts, and we are pleased to offer such opportunities to your young people in this way.



Last Day of Term: Tuesday 29th March

The term finishes at 13.00, at which point students can be collected. Teaching continues until the end of term and the expectation is that all students will attend. Students may be collected from 13.00; Houses and the school site will be closed from 15.00.

All students should expect to take all their possessions

with them for the holidays, with the exception of international students who can make arrangements for storage, with the agreement of houseparents.

(Spring cleaning and routine repairs, as well as external lettings take place in the boarding houses over the holidays, and some students

change rooms on their return for the Summer Term).

In the hopeful expectation of warmer weather (!) in the summer, please can students return with clothes and footwear appropriate to the season. Students and parents are reminded that concert dress, water bottles and masks are also needed.

Wishing you a very pleasant Easter Break (when it comes)

Best wishes,



Paul Bambrough
Principal

