

10th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Update letter for families – 10th September

It has been a fantastic start to the new term. I have been very impressed with the positive attitude the students have shown in lessons and re-engaging with their learning. Keeping with the positives, it was great to finally welcome families back into our school, in person, for the Meet the Tutor Evening that took place yesterday evening. The energy in the halls was fantastic, and we look forward to hosting a similar event for our KS4 and 5 families later this month.

Please read on for essential updates.

Year 7

The new members of the school community have been finding their feet this week. Our Year 7 students have shown considerable resilience in coping with the challenges which a new school brings, finding their way around the site and adjusting to the new routines of secondary school. It has been lovely to observe so many of our students in other years helping and supporting the new students, both in form time and around the site between lessons.

LFT Testing in school

The LFT testing in school has been very successful and has caused minimal disruption to learning. We have now completed the testing of the vast majority of students, with a small remainder scheduled to have their second on-site test today. Thank you to all students for the mature and sensible attitude they have shown in the testing centre, this has made the process run incredibly smoothly.

Home Testing

Following national guidance, we now fully return to twice weekly testing at home. By Friday we will have issued your child with their new batch of test kits and explained that they are to take the tests twice a week, on a Monday and Thursday and report the results to both the school, via **Test Register** and to the **NHS**. This is the same system as we operated last year and throughout the holidays. Our new Year 7 families have been sent a separate letter, explaining how to activate their **Test Register** account.

A reminder of the Home Testing Procedure is on page 5 of this update.

Junction of Hollow Lane and the Abbey Green (Wood Lane)

It is with sadness that I write to you to inform you of an incident that have happened earlier this week involving a student being struck by a vehicle as they made their way home from school at the junction of Hollow Lane and the Abbey Green (Wood Lane). Two similar incidents occurred during 2018.

You may be aware that our governing body has written to the various authorities before to highlight the potential risks that this section of road presents to pedestrians, particularly the many students that walk along this road to get to and from school each day.

Abbey College promotes road safety to all our students and members of staff supervise them as they enter and exit the school each day wearing high-viz; however, this section of road continues to concern us due to the



unsuitable safety measures that are in place combined with the narrowness of the road when cars are parked in the designated bays. The road effectively becomes a single lane of traffic on a regular basis, but with cars travelling in both directions as vehicles give way to one another. We feel that this makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely with a clear view of where the traffic is coming from.

It is fortunate that, while the student needed medical attention, no severe or permanent injury has been caused. We would also like to thank the students and staff for assisting when these incidents took place. However, we fear that it will only be a matter of time before this does happen.

Owing to these concerns, we have written to the various councils, highways authorities and our MP to request a review of this situation and to improve the safety for our students and other members of our community along this section of road. While we are not launching a formal campaign, we would welcome your support in highlighting these concerns to our local representatives and bringing about positive changes more quickly.

We will continue to reiterate safe road crossing with students during Form Time and to supervise road crossing along Hollow Lane and near the Abbey Green. However, I would like to ask parents who drive to school to be vigilant around this junction and near the Abbey Green whilst dropping off and picking up your child(ren), especially whilst reversing out of parking bays.

Catering and lunch times teething issues

Our catering provision is run by Taylor Shaw who have installed a new team, in the majority, over the summer break. We are aware that on Monday through to Wednesday, the canteen queue was slower than usual for some students. Taylor Shaw are working hard to speed up their processes, and certainly by this Thursday the queue was faster by 10 minutes. We will monitor this closely with Taylor Shaw over the forthcoming weeks and will extend the break/lunch time sessions if necessary to ensure all students have a reasonable time to eat.

Taylor Shaw intend to put together a survey for families to review provision and to update them on their improvement plans moving forward. Thank you for your patience and please do contact your child's RSL if you would like to raise a concern.

Assessment

Year 7 students will be sitting GL Assessment Tests next week. The tests are spread over three weeks, and will take place on the following dates:

- Maths 16.09.21;
- Science 20.09.21;
- English 21.09.21;
- Cognitive abilities 27.09.21;
- Reading and spelling tests which will take place in English lessons in the week beginning 27.09.21.

The students will all receive an exam timetable giving their location and seat number. Students do not need to revise for these tests they are used to establish a baseline so that any student support or curriculum changes that are needed, can be quickly actioned. More details of the tests are in the GL Assessment letter.

SIMS app issues

As many of you will be aware we use two external online services to support the running of our school:

- Parent pay
- SIMS

We are aware many of you have had issues setting up your accounts. Thank you for your patience as we resolved the technical issues. If you are still struggling to access your online accounts please email the following addresses with the students name, year group and school to:

- Parent pay support: help@cmat.support
- SIMS support: simssupport@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk

Ethos

It has been wonderful to see our students return with such focus and positivity after the summer break. They have received a huge number of spirit points and have set the tone for a fantastic year of learning.

Uniform Reminders

The vast majority of students have returned to school looking smart and ready to learn wearing full school uniform. Please support us to maintain our high standards by ensuring the following:

- black opaque tights for students wearing our school skirt
- black socks for students wearing trousers

We also expect for students to have their shirts tucked in and to wear their skirts properly without rolling them up at the waistband.

Vacancies at Abbey College

Exams Officer

We are currently recruiting for an Exams Officer, please use the link below for details. This is a non-teaching post, which is 37 hours per week and is term time plus 15 days. If you are interested, please review the information on our website. If you would like to discuss the post in more detail please get in touch via the contact emails on the advert. The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 20th September.

For more information, please see the [Vacancies](#) section of our website. Alternatively, if you would prefer to speak to someone about this role, please contact Lara Fowler via the [Contact Us](#) section of our website.

Feeling worried or anxious?

Please use the dedicated button [Worried? Anxious?](#) on our website to confidentially raise concerns or to request support, including:

- Peer Mediation, to help students resolve any friendship issues they may have;
- Reporting a concern about the bus;

- Reporting unkindness or bullying;
- Ask for support with anxiety.

The successful start of the new academic year is a significant milestone in the journey back to normality. We will continue to ensure that we do everything we can to ensure students safety and I thank you for your continued support. Please continue to take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully



Andy Christoforou
Headteacher

Parent Diary Dates 2021-22

Date	Activity/Event
<i>Thursday 16th September</i>	<i>Meet the Tutor Event – Sixth Form 4.30-6.30pm</i>
<i>Thursday 23rd September</i>	<i>Meet the Tutor Event – Years 9, 10 and 11 4.30-6.30pm</i>
<i>Tuesday 28th September</i>	<i>Year 7 STEM Day</i>
<i>Thursday 30th September</i>	<i>Year 6 Open Evening 4.30-6.30pm</i>
<i>Thursday 7th October</i>	<i>Post-16 Open Evening 4.30-6.30pm</i>
<i>Thursday 14th October</i>	<i>Year 11 Virtual Parents' Evening 4.30-7.30pm</i>
<i>Thursday 21st October</i>	<i>School Photographer visit for Years 7, 10 and 12</i>
<i>Friday 22nd October</i>	<i>School closed – additional holiday for Queen's Jubilee</i>
<i>Monday 25th to Friday 29th October</i>	<i>School closed – half term</i>
<i>Monday 1st November</i>	<i>School closed – INSET day</i>
<i>Tuesday 2nd November</i>	<i>Students return - Autumn Term 2</i>

Reminder of Home Testing Procedures

It is important to remember that although we have nominated set days for testing, if your child shows [symptoms of Covid-19](#), they can take a test at any time.

By your child taking the test kits from school premises they have an obligation to report their results and which we are sure you and they will do. Consent is not required to complete testing at home.

Parents are reminded that children aged 12 to 16 years of age can administer the test themselves. Children 12 years and under should be tested by an adult. If you would like more information on how to test your child please visit: [How to take a coronavirus self-test swab - Bing video](#)

Written information and a step by step guide on how to take the test is contained here (['Your Step By Step Guide for COVID-19 Testing'](#)) and the data regulations regarding the retention of data are contained here ([personal data](#))

 **TestRegister** Every Monday and Thursday you will receive an e-mail from **Test Register**. This email will have a link and it is this unique link that you need to click on to register your test. You cannot use a link from a previous e-mail, it must be the one that was issued for that day's test.

Once you have registered your result with the school you will be asked to register the result with the NHS as well. We have enclosed the process of logging a test result on the accompanying page, it is not as difficult as it first looks.

- If your test result is negative you need do no more and the result will be logged, thank you.
- If, however your test result is positive, your child must immediately self-isolate and you should book them a PCR test. The PCR test to confirm your home test result is essential.
- If positive you will be contacted by the school to confirm they have received the result and to remind you to book a PCR test for your child immediately.
- The responsibility for track and trace is no longer the responsibility of the school, and this responsibility now lies with the NHS. We will not be operating any track and trace processes, and will not be sending home close contacts. Further details on what to do if anyone in your family tests positive can be found on this NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

We do not expect **Test Register** to crash or experience problems but should this happen and the site is unavailable please do still report your test result directly to the NHS website here: www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the process of testing, recording of results please do not hesitate to contact us.