

28<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Update letter for families – 28<sup>th</sup> January**

Following last week's announcement from the Prime Minister, we are no longer insisting that students wear face coverings in classrooms. In addition, he announced that the wearing of face coverings would no longer be required in school settings since Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January. However, Public Health England can issue separate guidance to schools, in each Local Authority, in accordance with the infection rates at a local level. Today, we received communications from the LA that owing to the infection rates in Cambridgeshire, they are still strongly recommending face coverings be worn in and around school buildings, on school transport and in communal areas to further reduce transmission. They will review their guidance after the half-term break. To that end, we recommend that your child continues to attend the academy with face coverings and sanitiser for the remaining two weeks of the spring half term, as we strive to protect our students, staff and the local community.

The current staff absence rates across Cambridgeshire are sadly being experienced here at Abbey College and unfortunately, we are seeing a steady increase in staff absences owing to Covid19. As a result, your child may be experiencing an increase in the number of lessons being covered by supply teachers or members of staff at present. Supply agencies are also experiencing shortages in supply teachers and are unable to meet the demands of the local area. Our senior team, extended leadership team and our teaching staff have all increased their teaching hours and are delivering cover lessons wherever possible, and will continue to do so. In addition, we are rotating subject specialists amongst those classes where teachers are absent for extended periods.

At this juncture, there are no plans for the implementation of home learning and our priority is to keep our school open so that children can continue with face-to-face education. We would like to reassure you that we will do everything possible to avoid this outcome and we are closely monitoring absence rates to take pre-emptive action to avoid this outcome.

Therefore, it would be sensible to prepare for any eventuality, should the situation change and remote learning become necessary.

- Please support us by checking with your child that they can access Microsoft Teams.
- If your child can not access MS Teams, please request a password reset by emailing [help@cmat.support](mailto:help@cmat.support), stating your child's name, year group and that they are a student at Abbey College.

Please continue to ask your child to test twice weekly and to upload their results on to [TestRegister](#) and on to the [NHS results website](#).

### Covid 2<sup>nd</sup> dose vaccinations for 12 to 15-year olds

On Thursday, we were informed that the second in-school vaccinations will take place on 11th February 2022. If you have any queries, please only contact the NHS-commissioned [School Age Immunisation Service \(SAIS\) Team](#) using this [link](#) or Telephone: 0300 555 5055. Alternatively, parents can book vaccinations for their child, if aged 12 or over, through the [NHS booking system](#).

Please read on for essential updates.

### Assessment

- Year 9 reports have been published this week on the Sims app.
- Year 12 exams are underway with reports due to be published just before half term.
- Year 10 Trials are underway, reports are due to be published immediately after half term.
- Year 11 Trials start immediately after half term.
- For help with the Sims app please contact: [simssupport@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:simssupport@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)

### Holocaust Memorial Day

Our Year group assemblies over the past two weeks have been reflecting on the atrocities of the Holocaust; remembering those who lost their lives as well as considering what we can do to stand up against prejudice and hatred. On Thursday, Miss Dowd led the sixth form in a moving memorial service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

### Headteacher Commendations

The following students have received a Headteacher Commendation this week. They will receive 10 spirit points and special postcard home.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Recognised for</b>
Caitlin L	100% attendance, zero Tells. always giving it 100% effort, well done Caitlin
Lewis G	100% attendance, zero Tells. Keeps pushing himself to improve, good job Lewis
Emily J	Really hard working, will give everything a go, and gives her best efforts with anything thrown her way
Owen G	Polite and hardworking young man
Lucas T	Reducing homework tells and improved attitude to learning in English.
Logan L	Mature and hardworking approach to school life.
Rosie L	For getting very involved with extracurricular activities and being a good role model for other students.
Evie R	For being kind, thoughtful and caring. Baking cookies and sweet treats (including vegan goodies) for her friends and teachers to brighten up their day. What a lovely gesture.
Angel E	Fantastic progress in the Trial 1 exams!
Rosie E	Top of the leader board for interact attendance

If you would like to nominate someone for an Abbey College Spirit Award then please follow this [link](#).

Congratulations to Jay Mercer who has received a Conditional Offer to study Mathematics at Robinson College at the University of Cambridge from September.

## Parent Forum Survey Feedback

Thank you for your input, as we had well over 100 responses. I want to lay out our approach for responding to the points raised.

### Specific responses, where parents left contact details.

*We will make contact directly with you to provide the information or support you require.*

### Common themes for the next meeting (10<sup>th</sup> February agenda)

- Catering provision (quality, cost and quantity of meals)

*Our Catering Manager, Chris Berry will be joining the Parent Forum on the 10<sup>th</sup> February to answer questions raised. In addition, he will produce an update for parents in the form of a 'You said, we did'.*

- Why do students have to eat outside - whatever the weather? In addition, there seems to be minimal benches for children to sit on to eat.

*We have covered seating/eating areas for each year group. Owing to the safety restrictions and the strict levels of ventilation we have to adhere to, once students finish eating their food, they must go outdoors to socialise. The covered areas have ample seating for each year group, and we have purchased a new marquee and additional seating for those that prefer al-fresco dining, or simply to sit and talk with friends. We ask you to ensure that your child wears a coat to school so that they are comfortable during the peak of our cold weather.*

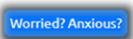
- Length of lunch times and concerns raised over queue lengths.

*Prior to the Covid restriction (up until 2019), we operated two breaks; 20-minute morning break and 40-minute lunch break. On average, 800 students would visit the canteen on one or more occasions during the day. With approximately 800 students accessing the canteen over 40 minutes, the last person through the canteen would have queued for approximately 25 minutes and therefore, had 15 minutes remaining for a break. This is far shorter for the morning break which is only 20 minutes long, where several students told us they simply would not queue for this slot.*

*Currently we have two split break times of 30 minutes each. Within each session, every year group has a designated slot to come and line up for the canteen. Students only need to line up for their sitting time, and a member of staff announces when it is their time for the canteen. The order of the sitting within each break rotates to ensure that no year group is always last. As it takes around 5 minutes for each year group to queue for the canteen, students have 25 minutes remaining of their break time on both occasions. 400 students visit the canteen over 30 minutes rather than the previous 800 students over the 20 and 40-minute breaks. However, there are always a minority of students who will simply stand close by the canteen awaiting their line-up time instead of enjoying their break and visiting the bathroom etc.*

As you can see, this is a much more efficient process, which has also allowed the canteen to broaden the food offer available owing to the longer break times. Next week in assemblies, we will remind students of the need to queue, only when their year group sitting is called to access the canteen.

### Feeling worried or anxious?

Please use the dedicated button  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.

Please continue to take good care of yourselves.

Yours faithfully



Andy Christoforou  
Headteacher

### Vacancies at Abbey College

Please click on the links for more details.

- *Art, Design and Food Technology Technician:* <https://www.mynewterm.com/school/Abbey-College,-Ramsey/137377/EDV-2022-ACR-66431/Art-Design-and-Food-Technology-Technician>
- *Site Officer:* <https://www.mynewterm.com/school/Abbey-College,-Ramsey/137377/EDV-2022-ACR-14330/Site-Officer>
- *Cleaner:* <https://www.mynewterm.com/school/Abbey-College,-Ramsey/137377/EDV-2022-ACR-74146/Cleaner>

### Parent Diary Dates 2021-22

Date	Activity/Event
Monday 14th-Friday 18th February	Half term – school closed
Monday 21st February	Inset Day – staff only in school
Tuesday 22nd February	Students return 8:30am
Thursday 24th February	Year 8 options evening 4:30-7:30pm
Tuesday 1st March	Year 9 STEM Day [rescheduled from 25th January]
Thursday 3rd March	Year 12 and 13 virtual parents' evening 4:30-7:30pm
Tuesday 8th March	Year 10 STEM day
Friday 1st April	Last day of Spring term