

30 June 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope that you have been able to enjoy something of the better weather in recent weeks and are not too frustrated by the extension of current rules. We are definitely moving forward and seeing a bit more normality and 'green shoots' in school.

We were really disappointed to have to postpone the Year 11 prom until (hopefully) Christmas time, and we are frustrated that some events, like the full transition planned for this September's Year 7, are now very unlikely to be able to go ahead fully. However, school feels (and looks) better with normal uniform expectations each day and a return to actual assemblies. We are really looking forward to a Sports Day which will involve all students (for the first time ever).

Last half term the now finished Year 11 and Year 13 did excellently overall on their assessments in an unprecedented time and with a format never before undertaken. Their results have been sent off and are now being processed by exam boards. Years 7 to 10 have stepped up to the challenge of internal end of year assessments and have also, in the main, risen to this challenge and worked hard. We will finally be able to give you some robust feedback about your sons/daughters' progress in coming weeks.

Covid Protection Measures

The guidance on measures for controlling the pandemic in schools hasn't changed since I was in touch before half term. The key measure for all is continuing to follow the basic but important procedures summarised by 'face, space and hands'. We are enjoying the return of some of the normal features of school but at the same time there isn't room for complacency. I'm sure you're aware that cases of Covid amongst the young and unvaccinated are on the rise. **Please continue to get your children to LFD test twice weekly on Sundays and Wednesdays as far as possible, and please register these tests.**

Priorities, Parent Survey and Forum

We wrote a summary of your feedback from the Parent Survey and Parent Forum which took place before half term two weeks ago, but I fear that this did not reach many of you – many apologies. I am attaching the summary with this letter. It is deliberately plain-speaking and I hope honest and clear. It outlines some ways forward on uniform, behaviour and home learning and also recognises that we have

Principal: Mr James O'Connell

Exeter Road, Teignmouth, Devon, TQ14 9HZ

Tel: 01626 774091 **Visit:** www.teignmouthsecondary.co.uk

work to do to get to where we could, should and will be. It is not an excuse but the last year has been exceptionally challenging. In recent weeks we are seeing an improvement in behaviour and the school ethos with greater normality and improving uniform.

Summer holiday activities

Also attached with this letter is a letter from Marcus Rashford. It outlines the summer holiday activities programme which is available for free to children who receive free school meals, but children and young people of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to attend. It is well worth taking a look at.

Key dates and events

As well as Sports Day which is due to take place on Friday 9 July (this date could change), we are hopefully looking forward to some form of outdoor summer concert (to be confirmed), Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze and Silver expeditions over forthcoming weekends, enrichment morning with several visiting speakers and organisations on 14 July, and new Year 6 to 7 students joining us for a day each in 'bubbles' in the last week of term.

The last day of this term will be a half day and end around 1pm on Friday 23 July. Results' days are on Tuesday 10 August for A-Levels and level 3 courses and Thursday 12 August for GCSEs and level 2 courses. The Autumn term will start for Years 8-11 and Year 13 this September on Thursday 9 September, Wednesday 8 September will be only for our new Year 7 and Year 12. I will confirm all of these details before the end of term.

Finally, I hope you will all be able to enjoy something of the summer at some point. I am currently tormented and frustrated in equal measure by a 16 year old and an 18 year old, both of whom have currently finished school, and struggle to drag themselves out of bed and decide what to do each day. Imagine having that freedom and time!

Best wishes



James O'Connell
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