

Questions from the Zoom Chat Facility Year 8 meeting October 2021

Vaccinations

Will there be catch-up vaccinations for pupils who didn't have the first jab in September and if so, will the flu vaccination be offered in school at the same time?

The school-aged immunisation team have been advised that from 25th October all children and young people aged 12-15 will be able to access a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine via the National Booking System (NBS). This offer will vary dependent on where you live e.g., GP, mass vaccination centre. You should receive a letter from the national team outlining this 'out of school' offer, which will advise who is eligible and how to book.

For flu, there will be catch-up clinics that are set out by Berkshire immunisation team in the local community.

PE kit

During the last academic year, students were asked to come to school in their PE kit on the days they had PE and did not have use the changing rooms. Can this not be continued until the Covid situation gets better?

We will keep the PE changing situation under review but we have no immediate plans to change this. There were disadvantages to having students in PE kit all day, including hygiene and limitations on what activities could be undertaken in less than ideal weather.

Curriculum

Could we get more information on curriculum/resources for year 8?

In terms of curriculum information we do not provide recommendations for other books. We have a curriculum which uses particular resources chosen by us for use in school. Students are provided with everything they need to support their learning in school.

What exam boards are we following for each subject?

We do not follow examination specifications in Year 8. You do not need to know this until Year 9, when students start on GCSE work in the core subjects.

Could we get more information on any specific Apps on the iPad which support students' learning?

Students know what apps they are asked to use in lessons. There is definitely some work we could do in ensuring you as parents are aware of which apps are used, how and for what. Some of these will certainly be unfamiliar to you. Thank you for raising this - I will ask the relevant staff to pull this information together to circulate to you.

Are there opportunities for catch up-sessions etc. for lessons that children are struggling with?

Teachers will watch out for this and will try and provide whatever support they can in lessons themselves. Additional support if needed can be provided if this is thought to be necessary.

I love the varied and broad homework that is set, however I do feel concerned there is an awful lot of it. At times the teachers are setting homework that is due back with short notice. Please could you outline the homework policy and expectations?

What should happen is that homework is set when it is appropriate and worthwhile to do so rather than to a timetable. This means that the amount will vary from day to day. However, teachers should be giving reasonable deadlines for work to be completed. We will make sure that this message is taken back to teachers.

Is diversity and inclusion a topic of interest to help the children to understand and appreciate?

We are addressing this important topic through our assembly and PCS programme as well as in various areas of the curriculum.

When are the children choosing their GCSEs?

The Options process will take place in year 9

Lockers

Will the school be providing lockers for students?

The school will be offering the students the opportunity to hire lockers in the near future. This agreement will be with an external company for a small fee. We will be writing to parents with more information shortly.

Additional activities

Are there any additional activities planned for year 8?

We are very much hoping to get back to our normal level of additional activities and trips out of school. Covid permitting (!) we should be arranging Geography and History visits out of school, and drama and art visits. In addition, there are in-school activities. For example, you should get a letter soon about a whole-day event in school called 'Talk the Talk' which helps students develop their public speaking skills.

Some children can't go to after school clubs for sports, is there a lunch time provision?

There are lots of clubs taking place and the students should know about these. We know that the provision is not as wide as it has been in the past - we are working back to a full

programme, and also hoping to develop more activities which are led by older students. Please remember that we don't have all our sports facilities up and running yet, and that we have to provide activities for other year groups as well. Teachers who run events and activities are working very hard to provide what they can.

Are residential trips a possibility after COVID for year 8?

We certainly want to get back to a programme of residential visits but it is currently difficult to plan ahead for these. Realistically, there will not be any further residential opportunities until next year.

Are year 8 students able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme?

Duke of Edinburgh's Award is only open to Year 9 and up as there is a lower age limit set by the Award scheme.

PTCs

PTC - each meeting is so short that it really doesn't allow time for constructive 2-way dialogue. Any chance that the meetings can be increased from 5 minutes to 7 or 8 minutes? It really can be frustrating when you are chopped off mid sentence.

I'm afraid we will be keeping to the 5 minute limit if we are holding PTCs online. This is because most teachers who teach lower school groups have multiple classes and lots of parents to see. The longer the appointment, the fewer parents they can see. 5 minutes can be very effective if used well - we will be working with staff this year to ensure that the time is used well. Serious issues can always be followed up outside the PTC itself.

SRE

Is there a deadline for requests to withdraw my child from sex education classes?

There is no set deadline but must be in advance of the lesson. You will receive a letter prior to the unit commencing which you can then reply to.

Please can we all be informed on what is going to be covered in RSE classes

This information will be included in the letter.

School gate

The Green Drive school gate used to open during school opening/closing times. This was very useful for students arriving from A4 side.

Unfortunately, the area outside the gate becomes extremely muddy during inclement weather and also provides an extra issue with capacity to staff this so we will not be opening this gate.

IT

Is the stylus now mandatory?

The stylus has always been mandatory as stated in the student handbook