

Dear Parents and Carers,

1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

We hope you have had a good summer holiday and your children are looking forward to returning to school. This letter includes reminders about topics such as uniform, attendance and Covid procedures, to help ensure the term gets off to a good start.

School starts at **8.30am on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September** and all students are expected to be on time. Year 7 will meet in the WM Hall as they did during Summer School. Some students in Years 8 and 10 may not be in from the start of the day on Monday due to the Lateral Flow testing programme – please follow the links below for details of when your child is due in.

### **Lateral Flow Testing – Start of Term**

As explained in letters we sent out before the summer break (available on our website or follow links below), the Government expects schools to test students with Lateral Flow Devices (LFD), twice, 3 to 5 days apart, in school on their return in September. If your child is in Year 8 or 10, please check the time when they are expected in school on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September. All other students will have their first test this Thursday or Friday, again check the schedule for the time of your child's test.

Students will then be expected to test at home each week on Sunday and Wednesday evenings until we receive further guidance from the DfE. We will provide test kits to take home.

[Year 7 letter re LFD tests](#)

[Year 8 to 11 letter re LFD tests](#)

#### Wey Valley Academy

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### **Covid19 safeguarding precautions in school**

The academy will follow the guidance from the Department for Education which requires us to “*maintain proportionate protective measures such as testing, ventilation and extra hygiene precautions that help keep children and staff safe and minimise disruption to face-to-face education.*”

As from September 6<sup>th</sup> students will no longer be taught in ‘Bubbles’ or in ‘Zones’ and will not be required to wear face coverings. They will need to wash their hands on a regular basis and we will keep rooms well ventilated. We have also kept the staggered break and lunchtimes to reduce students mixing. Students and staff who wish to wear face coverings may continue to do so.

### **Self-Isolation**

The rules on self-isolation have changed. If an individual develops symptoms, they are still expected to get a PCR test and if it is positive, they must isolate.

Children under 18 years and 6 months or adults who have been double vaccinated will now no longer need to self-isolate if they live with someone or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. They must take a PCR test or isolate if they develop symptoms. This should mean that we do not have to send any students home this academic year (unless they test positive). We will notify parents if their child has been a close contact of another student or adult who has tested positive and explain the monitoring steps that then need to be taken such as regular Lateral Flow tests.

Please can you inform the school if your son or daughter is a close contact, outside of school, with a positive case of covid. This will assist us in monitoring any outbreaks.

We have reviewed our risk assessments and developed a contingency plan in case the Local Authority or government tell us to increase protective measures in the event of an outbreak or another lockdown. This contingency plan would see Bubbles, face coverings and other protective measures return and in the worst-case students sent home and remote learning activated. We all hope that this will not be required.

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### **Covid Vaccinations**

We have received letters from two parents asking that we provide individual risk assessments and don't vaccinate their children against Covid at school. To be clear, the response to this request is that the school is unaware of any proposed role for schools on the vaccination of children against Covid. As such, it would be inappropriate to provide assurances or otherwise as requested when the request is based on speculation. As always, we will act in the best interests of children in our care and work with parents to minimise any risk to the children. The usual NHS vaccination programmes that schools have done for many years will continue and all the normal parental information and consent protocols will be in place.

### **Uniform**

Please remember, as was set out clearly in the letter to all parents at the end of July, that we expect all students to be wearing correct school uniform, not to have any facial piercings apart from one stud in each ear (clear plastic studs or plasters covering piercings are NOT permitted), and hair should be a natural colour and not extreme in style. If students arrive at school not in appropriate school uniform, they will be sent home to change. Full details are available on the website.

We will return to students changing at school for PE lessons this year.

<https://weyvalley-academy.co.uk/parents/uniform/>

### **School Attendance**

Research has shown that students with higher attendance attain better grades in their final exams than students of similar ability with lower attendance. This term we will be increasing the rewards we offer students for good attendance and punctuality. We will be aiming for 97% attendance as an absolute minimum level (even that equates to an entire week off school in a year!). Please support us in our drive to improve attendance.

We have appointed two new members of staff to act as Family Liaison Officers and they will be there to support families who are struggling with children who are anxious or reluctant to attend school for whatever reason.

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### **Building and Site Improvements**

The flat roof over Design and Technology and the Library is being replaced. This work commenced in July and should be complete by the end of September. Please can any parents who drive into school be very careful on leaving the site as there is reduced space due to scaffolding.

New gates have been fitted at the rear of the school and a comprehensive CCTV system installed to support site security.

### **Classrooms and Teaching and Learning**

A further 10 classrooms have had the latest giant touch screen display panels installed, replacing the old projectors and white boards. This is part of a rolling programme designed to provide the best possible learning environment for the students. The computers in all five IT rooms have also been replaced or upgraded. The tables and chairs in most classrooms have been renewed to provide a better, more comfortable learning environment for the students.

Design and Technology have had a new industry level milling machine and a laser cutter installed to support the new GCSE and BTEC Engineering courses we are starting in September.

The climbing traversing wall in the Sports Hall has been renovated and will be ready for use later this term once safety checks have been completed.

All departments have had substantial investment in new textbooks and online learning resources ready for September 2021.

### **Summer School**

During the last week of August, we hosted a Summer School for the new Year 7 students, over 180 students attended and a great time was had by all! They experienced so much including Paddle Boarding, Art, IT, Music, Forest School Activities, Nature trails, geography skills, reading programmes and much more. We hope that this will become a regular summer feature in years to come.

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## **Parents' Consultation Evenings**

Following the success of the online PCEs last year we have decided to keep the online format again this year. We are keen to receive feedback from parents to help make the process more efficient and rewarding for you. Last year most parents commented that not having to come out in the evening and then to queue for a 5-minute talk was a real benefit. Some parents did experience issues with WiFi connection or wanted more time to talk with the teacher. To help with this we will always be able to arrange face to face meetings if required.

All Year groups, apart from Year 8 will have a PCE meeting this term. Year 8 will have one immediately after Christmas. Year 11 have a busy term ahead with full programme of support meetings and their first formal examinations in November.

## **Key Dates**

Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Staff Training Day and Covid LFD tests start
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Staff Training Day and Covid LFD tests
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Students return to school
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 11 Information Evening
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 7 Tutor Evening
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 6 Open Evening
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 11 Parents' Evening (Online)
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> / 15 <sup>th</sup> October	School Photographer
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October	Half Term starts
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> November	Staff Training Day
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Students return to school
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 10 Parents' Evening (Online)
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 11 Mock Examination series 1 start
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 9 Parents' Evening (Online)
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Year 11 Mock Examination series 1 finish
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Staff Training Day
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Holiday starts

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Please remember if you need to speak with someone about a concern you might have then please try to do so in the following order:

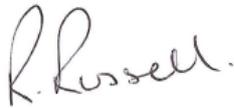
If it is a pastoral issue (attendance, behaviour, personal issues etc) contact the Tutor first, then the Head of Year and finally The VP for Inclusion Mr Lydford.

If it is an academic issue contact the subject teacher first, then the Curriculum Leader and finally the VP for Standards, Mr Neill or the VP for Curriculum Mr Dyer

For information about Special Educational Needs please contact the AVP and SENCo Mrs Field.

With only a few days until the new school year begins, we are all looking forward to a great year. We have lots of activities planned for the children and fingers crossed, nothing will prevent them from happening.

Yours faithfully



Rob Russell  
Principal

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