



SOLIHULL

8 September 2020

Dear Parents

Welcome Back! I really do hope that the lockdown period and ensuing constraints have not weighed too heavily on you and your family and that the inevitable pressures that they have brought, have not prevented you from enjoying at least some enjoyable family time.

The start of every new academic year is special and exciting and this one particularly so, as we embrace our incredibly fortunate position of being a part of the Senior School community within the bigger 3-18 school, that I feel incredibly privileged to assume a leading role in.

School is now very much back in session, albeit in some cases (as previously outlined), not in the way we would all necessarily want it to be. Teaching staff, as previously documented by the Headmaster have worked tirelessly for many months to ensure that we are in a position to hit the ground running at the start of what we all hope will be an incredibly enjoyable and successful term for all. My thanks also to all of the non-teaching staff who, under the Bursar's direction, have overseen the repurposing of the Warwick Road site, not least in the timely handover of the Mark Hopton Building, a fabulous new addition, housing English, Psychology, Classics, Learning Support, an extension to our Food Technology provision and in time, our new Dance Studio.

I hope also that the information about the nature of the staggered days, our teaching and learning plan and our co-curricular provision was a useful guide as to how we are going to manage, in the early stages, the impact of COVID considerations that we are obliged, for all the right reasons, to embrace. The co-curricular programme will certainly be full and varied, if a little different in nature.

Please bear with us whilst we slowly modify our approach in line with Government and health advice and hope that before too long we will be free of COVID constraints. In the meantime, thank you for your understanding and for the vital role you are playing in making it all work.

I really do hope that Day 1 has gone well for your son or daughter. We are doing all we can to ensure that all pupils are very comfortable in their surroundings and that Forms/Year Groups and indeed, all teams/squads, etc., feel a really important part of something very special. *Bubbling* will be strange for the pupils (and of course, for staff too) but it is necessary to minimise the likelihood of the pandemic infiltrating the school community and to support the careful, ongoing care and consideration that you and your children are continuing to make outside the school gates.

You may well now be aware of your son/daughter's Form Tutor and aspects of the Form grouping. As has been previously outlined, September 2020 was always going to be one of great positive change and one of those changes was always destined to be in the construction of the Form groupings. Great care has been taken to appropriately assimilate the existing Solihull pupils, the Saint Martin's pupils and those joining us from a host of other schools. Inevitably, this has required some movement across year groups and it may well be that your son/daughter is with a different Form Tutor than was previously the case, and with many different pupils too. Rest assured that appropriate information sharing has been and will be, extremely robust and that nothing is more important to us than dispensing the very best pastoral care that we can.

Head of the Senior School Sean A Morgan BA

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Inevitably, there may well be some early term 'settling in' issues that some pupils experience; lots of new processes to come to terms with, a new physical environment for many and new people to get to know. To a degree, this is natural and to be expected and is highly likely to dissipate very quickly. Should any concerns be ongoing, then do please make contact with the relevant Form Tutor.

Whilst on the topic of home/school communication, could I please ask that as a general rule, you encourage your son/daughter (as we will!) to alert their Form Tutor in real time of any issues, rather than allowing a matter to fester/be taken home before we are aware. It is far better to allow your child to resolve any issues themselves wherever possible, not least to develop independence and resilience and urge them to speak to the relevant adult in school at the earliest possible stage. We will of course be in contact with you should a need ever arise.

Whilst the current climate prevents us from hosting our showcase events, welcome evenings, etc., rest assured that our teaching and learning provision will proceed unhindered, as will our commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of all of the young people in our care.

The start of the academic year 2020 also sees us introducing our NOVUS Curriculum which puts, at its heart, the development of 4 major skills:

Flexible	Able to listen, synthesise information and adapt
Front-Footed	Able to be independent, proactive and brave
Grounded	Able to be self-aware, accountable and emotionally intelligent
Giving	Able to be supportive, generous and altruistic

We believe that these four skills, coupled with our aims and motto, are key to a pupil thriving both personally and academically and teachers will weave these traits into their teaching and feedback during the course of the academic year.

Further details on our NOVUS Curriculum can be found on the website and in the Senior School Parents' Handbook which can be found on the website also. The Parents' Handbook contains lots of useful information and though by no means exhaustive, if you are new to the community, it will provide some helpful instruction on our methods and processes. I must say that the handbook reflects a 'COVID-free' world and any COVID-related communication that you have recently received, will temporarily override some of its content.

It was with great pride that I moved around the school today; seeing the pupils interact with one another and their teachers and the obvious delight they shared as a result of simply being 'in school'. I also thought that as a collective the pupil body looked incredibly smart. Your ongoing support in maintaining our high standards of uniform is very much appreciated. For those of you whose son/daughter has been unable to acquire all of the necessary items from our uniform supplier, I really do sympathise, please rest assured that we are in regular contact with them to ensure the very prompt arrival of some of the outstanding items. In the meantime, please understand that we are aware, and of course understanding, if your son/daughter is needing to wear an appropriate substitute in the short term.

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One of the unfortunate consequences of the current climate, is our inability to host a number of our annual events, not least in welcoming parents at the start of a new academic year via an on-site presentation and get-together. Rest assured, we will be in touch about remote Welcome Evenings and indeed how Parents' Evenings are going to function, very soon.

Despite the constraints and implications of the pandemic, I do truly believe that this is a brilliant time to be a member of our community – a period that will certainly loom very large in the school's incredibly proud and successful history. We will do all we reasonably can to ensure that the young people in our care, above all else, are happy and comfortable in their surroundings and are equipped with the tools to thrive both academically and socially.

Yours sincerely

Mr S A Morgan
Head of the Senior School

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