

21 July 2021

Dear Families,

I remember writing to you this time 12 months ago and quoting a parent who said that these have been 'the strangest of times'. Little did we know back then that we would still be living in those times now. Not a day goes by where COVID is not mentioned. It has continued to impact our daily lives both in school and at home. It has necessitated changes in the way our school runs, in our interactions with one another and in the opportunities we have been able to provide our young people.

In the face of all this adversity, staff, students and families have risen to the challenge. It has not been without the odd bump in the road but we have all kept focus on the journey ahead and on our core purpose. I am immensely proud of how far we have come; the teamwork, creativity, expertise and dedication shown by staff, alongside the resilience, hard work and positivity shown by the vast majority of our students.

There is still much work to be done and we do not yet know exactly what September will look like. Attached to this letter is an outline of what we do know the start of term will look like, which includes a staggered start to the term and the expectation for students to complete two lateral flow tests before returning to school. We have tried to minimise the impact of this by asking that the first test is completed at home, before we roll into a programme of on-site testing. Please read the attached letter carefully as there are key dates and times relating to your child(ren) by year group and form. We also know that testing should be continued at home for the month of September at least, at which point the government will undertake another review.

The start of term will also see us returning to a more 'pre-covid' timetable, with a single break and lunchtime, allowing staff time to engage better with students at these times and to encourage more enrichment opportunities to take place.

Other changes will include the necessity for students to switch off and put away their mobile phones and earphones **before entering the school site** in the morning. We have found that mobile phones have become an increasing distraction since returning from lockdown and sometimes lead to unsociable behaviour. This new policy will not only help to reduce the impact of that but it will help to ensure students' readiness to begin school no later than the bell at 8.40 am. Phones will be able to be switched back on again once the bell goes for all students at the end of the school day, which will be **3.10pm for all year groups** again.

We will also have a new catering provider in September, Accent Catering. I know that they are keen to share their plans with you in the new year and in the meantime are busy preparing a refurbishment of the café and planning menus that will include more fresh produce, less waste and opportunities to engage with students.

The Misbourne continues to be a Good School:

"A culture of ambition permeates the school; students are at the heart of everything the school does"

Ofsted



I will write to you all again before we return in September outlining any other important changes for the start of term, taking into account any government updates over August.

Before we know it, many of us will be back in school for the week beginning 9 August for A Level and GCSE results. I wish all of those Year 11 and Year 13 students well as they still have a few more weeks to wait and I will look forward to seeing them then.

I would like to conclude by thanking you once again for your continued support. Staff have genuinely appreciated any kind words and messages that have been sent in. They go a long way to making everything we do feel worthwhile as we continue to prioritise students' mental health and wellbeing alongside the best quality teaching and learning.

Once again, I anticipate that there may be further changes to the guidance from the DfE at some point over the summer break, so I will write to you all again at the end of August to outline any key points for the start of term.

In the meantime, I wish you all a pleasant, safe, and enjoyable summer break.

Yours faithfully,



Jo Meloni
Headteacher

Encl: Start of Term Arrangements for September 2021

