

16 July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Well, what a year it has been. Unfortunately, not all of the school community are in school as we reach the end of term, as COVID did finally hit us this week. We had done so well up until then. Headteachers of surrounding schools haven't been able to believe that Stour Valley had had no cases throughout this entire time. As you know, we have had a handful of students testing positive at the back end of last week and this week, and as a result other students are at home isolating. Not how we would have wished to end such a positive term in school.

The summer term has been a busy one, with all students fully returned to face-to-face teaching and being encouraged to maintain a routine of regular testing at home.

### **Year 11**

Teachers were very busy giving Y11 assessments, marking them and moderating Teacher Assessed Grades before the submission deadline of June 18. Our process was thorough and our staff worked diligently to ensure that our Year 11s got the best opportunities to succeed and be awarded the grades they deserve this summer.

We gave Year 11 a good send off on their last day, May 28, complete with DJ, balloons and an ice cream van. There are some lovely photos of the event on Facebook – lots of sunshine and smiley happy faces.

### **Activities Afternoons**

Miss Terry had the excellent idea of running activities afternoons once a week for the second half of the summer term. As the students have missed out on trips and extra-curricular activities for the past year, we agreed that collapsing the timetable once a week for an afternoon to have some fun and do something different would do everyone good, staff included. Staff ran the same activity each week and the students rotated around the different activities – seven weeks' worth. There were twenty four activities including swimming, samba drumming, darts, stage combat, art relaxation, wind buggy challenge, dragon's den, colouring and mindfulness – a wide and varied offer from our staff. The Y8 gardening club deserve a special mention as they have transformed the borders around the site and the outside environment is much improved as a result. Miss Bank, Mrs Ward and Ms Chappell have been leading this project (helped by other staff and a governor) and rolling up their sleeves and digging and preparing the ground in preparation for the Y8 students to do the planting. The site flower beds have been transformed as a result and are looking great.

### **Student Leaders**

The new team of prefects began their duties when Year 11 left. They have done a good job so far and I look forward to working more closely with them next year.

The Year 9 Student Leaders, organised by Miss Duffy, organised lunchtime clubs such as a Wii Sports tournament, gingerbread decorating, debating club and a cake designing competition. I have also been most amused by the guess the teacher Masked Singer activity that has gone on in form time. Well done to the Student Leaders and to Miss Duffy for an idea that injected a bit of fun into form time.



## **Everyone's Invited**

This half term a group of SVCS students have been working with Miss Howard on a project to respond to the 'Everyone's Invited' website highlighting the issue of sexual harassment in schools. The whole school will be building on combating this issue in September, which has been so ably begun by our students in this video: <https://youtu.be/L8EI-722CBO>. We are very proud of the students that volunteered to be in the video and of those who worked behind the scenes.

If you are concerned about sexual harassment, here are some resources to support parents and carers:

<https://theconversation.com/a-parents-guide-to-ending-sexual-harassment-and-assault-88897>

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/online-sexual-harassment-advice-for-parents-and-carers-of-13-17-year-olds>.

## **Staffing**

We say goodbye to Mr Harris, teacher of Maths and Computer Science this term. He has taken the decision to take early retirement. He will be sadly missed. He has been teaching at the school for seven years. We wish him a happy, healthy retirement.

We welcome Mr Boulden to teach Maths from September and Mrs Porter will be teaching Computer Science.

I am pleased to report that we are fully staffed for September.

## **COVID testing in September**

The latest government guidance is asking schools to reinstate their Lateral Flow Test Centres and test students twice before they return to school fully. Our tentative plan is to test Year 10 and 11 (which is the current Y9 and 10) on Thursday 2 and Monday 6 September and to test Years 8 and 9 (current 7 and 8) on Friday 3 and Tuesday 7 September. We will confirm these arrangements and testing slots on Wednesday 1 September. The senior team will meet on that day to update our Risk Assessment and finalise plans for testing. Please keep the dates on your calendar and we will confirm testing slots on Wednesday 1 September.

## **NHS Track and Trace**

Please read the attachment giving details of how track and trace will work from Monday 19 July. It will no longer be the responsibility of the school from that point. We will continue to track and trace over the weekend so be aware that your child may be required to self-isolate if positive PCR tests are reported to us over the weekend. This could happen up to Sunday evening.

## **Return to school dates to allow for Year 7 Transition days**

Mon 6 September Year 7 Only

Tue 7 September and Weds 8 September Year 7, 10 and 11

Thu 9 September Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 – whole school

All that remains is for me to thank you for your continued support throughout this year. I have appreciated the many kind and supportive messages from parents and carers as we have navigated uncharted waters throughout the year. Please ensure you pencil the testing dates pre-start of term onto your calendars and look out for communications from the school on Wednesday 1 September.

I wish you all a happy, healthy summer.

Mrs R Kelly  
Headteacher

