



From the Headmaster

It was good to welcome prize-winners and parents into the School Hall last Friday for our annual Speech Night. Although a little pared down this year, it was pertinent to be reminded that celebrating success is at the heart of what we do, and it was a pleasure to recognise the hard work, tenacity and achievement of so many of our students. We may have only had a third of our usual numbers in the Hall for the event, but the wider School community joined us online for the live broadcast, with over 800 views to date. The [recording](#) will be available online for a few more days if you would like to watch it. I was particularly impressed with the wisdom and maturity of our School Captains Alex and Grace, who in their speeches demonstrated, once again, what wonderful ambassadors they and the entire School Leadership Team are for the School.

COVID-19 Testing

The number of Covid-19 cases in School has remained low in comparison to other schools in the area, but we are unfortunately now starting to see a rise in the number of positive lateral flow tests being reported. An additional concern is that there have been some cases of students and staff testing positive for COVID-19 using lateral flow tests, but going on to have a negative PCR test. There is much speculation in the media about what is causing this to happen. Whilst national advice is that a PCR result overrides the lateral flow test, for clarification, we advise students to remain at home if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms following a positive lateral flow test and a negative PCR test.

The Local Authority has also recommended that students err on the side of caution and self-isolate if there is good evidence of COVID-19 infection (loss of taste or smell, high temperature, new persistent cough). Further, the UKHSA has just released the following statement, "UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have been made aware of some areas reporting positive LFD test results with subsequent negative PCR tests and are currently looking into the cause. Whilst the UKHSA investigation is under-way, we advise that if a pupil or staff member has been in close contact with a positive case (such as a household member) or has displayed Covid-19 symptoms *and* has tested positive on an LFD (but subsequently tested negative on a PCR), they are treated as potentially infectious. We recommend they isolate and remain out of the setting, for 10 days."

Work will be available on Satchel One for any student who is self-isolating, and lessons will be live-streamed where possible. Isolating students should return only once any symptoms have cleared and they have had a negative lateral flow or PCR test.

Students and staff are encouraged to continue to test twice-weekly over the half-term break, and preferably the night before term resumes on 3 November. Lateral flow test kits were handed out last week; any student without a test kit should see their form tutor.

The latest Government guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection, updated 11 October, is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance.

My thanks go to all parents, staff and students for your continued support and efforts to keep the School community safe.

Vaccination Programme

The Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care have written a [joint letter](#) to parents about the vaccination of children aged 12 to 15 and the importance of continuing with twice-weekly Covid-19 testing and reporting.

Information from [NHS Gloucestershire](#) states: "In Gloucestershire, the school-based Covid-19 vaccination programme for 12 to 15-year-olds is being delivered by Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC). Children who are 12 years old and over on the day the School Age Immunisation Service team visits the school will be offered a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

"The GHC vaccination team will be working closely with schools to ensure that all eligible children are offered a vaccination during the autumn term. Consent will be sought from the parent, guardian or carer in the same way as for any other school vaccination programme, at least seven days before the date vaccinations are due. In Gloucestershire, schools will send out a letter on behalf of the vaccination team with the date of the vaccination offer in school and a link to the online consent form, along with additional information about the programme."

We are still awaiting details of when the programme will start in schools, and we will update parents as soon as we have any further news.

Mental Health and Well-being

As it was World Mental Health Day on Sunday 10 October it seems appropriate to remind parents that TiC – the counselling, support and care service for young people and families – is running parent support groups with dates

from November through to January. The groups are free and are aimed at parents of young people aged 11-18 living in Gloucestershire struggling with mental health, emotional well-being and behavioural issues. Groups are weekly for six weeks and last 90 minutes. Daytime and evening groups are available. Face-to-face sessions take place in Cirencester, Tewkesbury, Stroud and Cheltenham, with a weekly Zoom group also available. More information is available at: www.ticplus.org.uk/parents-carers/parent-carer-support-groups.

Non-Uniform Day

A reminder that tomorrow is Non-Uniform Day. If your child wishes to participate, please remember to bring in a £1 donation which will be collected during Registration. Students should also ensure that they remember to bring any items that they would normally carry in their blazer. Funds raised will go to our link with PMM School in Uganda.

Mr Payne has been in contact with parents of Year 7 students to ask that they attend school in Games kit as normal tomorrow. We will make sure that we put in place alternative arrangements for a Year 7 Non-Uniform Day so that they do not miss out.

Finally

We held our final Open Day for Year 5 and 6 students last week, and received some lovely feedback from attendees; my thanks to all the Year 10 students who acted as tour guides during the eight sessions we ran in total. They proved to be excellent representatives, displaying a sense of quiet confidence and self-possession that can only have impressed the prospective students and their parents, exemplifying the benefits of a Sir Thomas Rich's education. Garde ta foy.



Matthew Morgan
HEADMASTER

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