



Dear Parent,

This has been another extraordinary term in an extraordinary year.

As pupils left at the end of last term, we were expecting them to return to school in January, albeit with certain restrictions in place. During the Christmas holidays, a huge amount of work was carried out to put in place testing so pupils could return safely. The day before the start of the spring term, everything changed. The country was, once again, put into lockdown with most pupils expected to stay at home and access their lessons remotely. Some boarders had arrived at School and had to return home again.

This was not the start of term we had hoped for, but we were quickly able to revert to a pattern of blended teaching with some pupils in school and the majority accessing their learning from home. Having developed our online programme over the last year, we were in a much better position than in March 2020. Lessons were delivered live and we had a high level of engagement from pupils from Bermuda to Hong Kong and all the time-zones in between. When we carried out a survey into how it was working, I was pleased to receive so many positive comments from parents. Staff have worked so hard to continue to deliver high-quality lessons and it was wonderful to be able to share the positive feedback from parents. Here are a few of the comments we received:

- *"I have been really impressed with the quality of provision and, academically, my son does not seem to have been too adversely affected by the change from face to face teaching to remote."*
- *"I have been very impressed by how well remote learning has been managed during lockdown. I would like to express my appreciation for how hard all the teachers and wider staff have worked through this very hard time. Many thanks."*
- *"The teachers are doing a phenomenal job keeping the students engaged. Thank you to you all."*

As well as providing lessons online, we have worked hard to ensure children have access to a wide and varied co-curricular programme. This term, pupils were able to participate in many online activities including Film Club, Model United Nations, and Orchestra. We also provided the Extended Day Programme to ensure wraparound care was available for pupils who attended School during lockdown and, since we reopened, for all pupils in March.

Our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils have been busy working exceptionally hard towards their GCSE and A Levels. Pupils have undertaken a series of assessments which will be used as part of the process for assessing final grades. Academic staff have been working in line with Government guidance to ensure pupils receive grades that are fair and appropriate. I'd like to wish pupils good luck with their end of year exams. You're nearly there!





There have been many other notable events this term. The PE staff have kept pupils on their toes with a different challenge each week including: the yoga challenge; the ladder challenge; and warm up and cool down routines. We also had the whole-school challenge where we competed against Gordon's School to see who could walk or run the furthest in 20 minutes.

The new Steinway pianos arrived in January and are already in regular use by our musicians, with some beautiful sounds being heard across campus. We were not able to have quite the launch event we had planned, but hope to have a spectacular piano showcase in the near future.

Assessments for sports scholarships and music scholarships took place earlier this term and I am pleased to say the quality of applications was high. We awarded 8 Sports and 4 Music scholarships and look forward to seeing how these talented musicians and sports pupils progress during their time at the School. I have asked Reception to make some space in the trophy cabinet!

The Equestrian Centre has been working hard with the British Horse Society through lockdown to develop a 'Changing Lives through Horses' programme which will run at the school from next term. This programme will provide an alternative learning environment for some of our pupils. The skills developed through the programme meet the requirements of ongoing education and training, employers and participants.

Within days of returning to School, Year 7 pupils set to work planting disease-resistant elm trees in Gatton Park. Our Junior School participated in World Book Day with our pupils and staff wearing pyjamas for their 'Bedtime Stories' theme. Another activity shortly after pupils returned was a 'UV Games' night. This gave pupils an opportunity to have some much needed fun within their house bubbles.

Our two therapy dogs, Max and Fin, completed their training this year and have been hard at work supporting pupils this term. They've been very good boys!

Before writing this letter, I was determined that it would not only be about COVID-19, but, given how it has dominated the way we run the School, I have not been able to avoid the subject!

I would like to thank you for all your support as we make frequent changes to teaching and boarding in order to comply with the Government guidelines relating to COVID-19. This includes the support you have provided for lateral flow testing which is so important in limiting the spread of the virus. Since January we have undertaken over 4000 tests on staff and pupils at the School and more tests have been carried out at home and within the Boarding Houses.

Finally, it's time to draw breath and leave you with best wishes for a relaxing Easter Holiday.

Yours sincerely

R Mitchell

Rea Mitchell
Acting Head