



25 March 2021

Letter from the Head of School

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are well as we come to the end of the Spring term. Spring represents a period of great optimism and positivity and we have indeed experienced such emotions at Toot Hill School this past term.

Reconnection with School

We were overjoyed to recently welcome all our students back to school and the manner of their return has been truly breath-taking. They have fully engaged with COVID-19 safety rules and have thrived in the classroom, even when tasked with wearing masks. In addition, I thank them for the level of kindness they have shown to their peers, the staff and the community as a whole. They truly do embody our ethos of 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Take Pride'.

I can reassure you that the school will continue to adhere to all government safety guidance after the Easter break and protect the local community as a whole in doing so. We do expect to see a gradual relaxation of restrictions next term in line with national guidance. Such changes, for example, have enabled us to relaunch Extended Study after Easter, even if it is just for Years 11 to 13 initially.

As a school, much has been learned throughout the pandemic, particularly with regards to IT technologies. In areas such as communication and home learning, there are considerable improvements we could now achieve for future years. Next term will offer a period of reflection and as such I will be seeking your thoughts, as well as those of our students, on the use of such technologies next academic year.

The recent cyber attack represented an 'icing on the cake' moment prior to our full school reopening. I am glad to report that our recovery process is nearing completion and our security systems will be all the stronger for it. I would like to thank students and parents for their patience in this matter but also our IT team who have ensured that the recovery process has been both swift and meticulous.

Teacher Assessment Grades

Clear communication has always been a significant strength of our parent and carer partnership and will play a crucial role in continuing to support our students through the impending process. Please be assured that everyone here at Toot Hill School and Sixth Form College work exceptionally hard to ensure that your child receives the grades that their continued hard work and dedication deserves.

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Students will be assessed on the content that their teachers are confident that they have been taught well despite COVID disruption. This will include a range of evidence including previous assessment and ongoing evidence gathering opportunities (EGOs). Teachers have already used strong evidence from earlier in the course to inform progress check data previously shared with you.

To complement this evidence, students will have the opportunity to further demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through in-class EGOs in controlled conditions during the next half term. Usual access arrangements will be provided for those students entitled to them. EGOs will be based on a combination of exam board materials, where appropriate, and bespoke assessment tasks that reflect course content and skills taught over the past two years. A detailed timetable will be provided on our return.

Further details of subject specific EGOs will be confirmed after Easter. Meanwhile, students should follow the tailored revision plans shared by teachers, that complement high quality teaching already experienced. Knowledge and skills will continue to be taught after Easter to ensure students are fully prepared for their forthcoming EGOs.

We will write to you again early in the summer term with a further update including the timetable of planned EGOs and subject specific information pertinent to your child.

Testing at home throughout the Easter holidays for schools and colleges

Following the success of the asymptomatic testing programme on the return to school and college, it is vital for students and staff to continue testing at home throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. I ask that students continue to:

- test twice a week at home from now on (all those who are able to)
- report results online as positive, negative or void. This information is critical in helping us to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country
- continue to test twice weekly over the Easter holidays
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of, the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases.

Thank you as always for your fantastic support of our school. A year on from the start of the pandemic, and all of the associated and more recent challenges, I greatly appreciate how we have faced these together with harmony, optimism and resilience. Our community is all the more stronger for it.

Yours sincerely



Dr C Eardley
Head of School