

11 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you at the end of the first week of the new school year. Students have returned to school very well – they have seemed genuinely pleased to be back with friends and staff and the opportunities that school provides. Year 9 students in particular have arrived excited and have responded really well to their first week with us. Students across all year groups look so smart in their Vandyke uniform.

Some students have appeared a little anxious and that is understandable but hopefully these feelings will be eased as they settle back into school routines. There is a lot of support available in school so please alert the house team to any concerns you have so that we can work together.

School obviously feels quite different to “the norm” in that we have a range of mitigation measures in place to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid. These include a staggered start and finish to the school-day, encouraging good hand hygiene including hand sanitising stations at every classroom, year group zones (or “bubbles”) for lessons and for break-times, one-way systems, additional cleaning rotas throughout the school-day for commonly touched areas eg door handles and classroom doors wedged open and windows open for ventilation. Students have taken these up sensibly and shown that they understand why they are important.

We have asked that students arrive in the morning on time but not too early because this creates difficulties in supervising students from different year groups separately. Year 9 and Year 10 students are asked to arrive between 8.35am and 8.45am, and Year 11 and Sixth Form students between 8.55am and 9.05am.

The staggered finish to the day has worked well, students from one year group leaving the site quickly before the next has come out and not waiting around in groups.

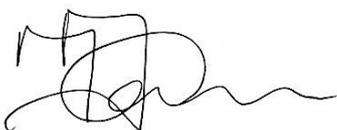
On Monday we are making some further changes to the zones and one-way systems to take account of the experience of these first few days and will be explaining these to all students on Monday morning.

We have instigated a system for pre-ordering food from the school café. The food offer initially is limited but will increase week on week. The lunch is delivered to students in their year area. This service is available to all students including those entitled to a free school meal. Payment is electronically from the Squid account. Students who have just joined the school were sent a letter about setting up an account. If you have any questions about payment by Squid please contact [finance@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk](mailto:finance@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk).

Thank you for the feedback you have provided, your questions and in some cases concerns you wished to raise. We will continue to respond as quickly as possible. This dialogue is helpful.

Vandyke Voice is our fortnightly school newsletter with the first edition of the term due out next week emailed straight to you and available on the school website. I will continue to keep you updated through regular letters such as this in any case given the evolving situation.

Best wishes



Tim Carroll