

18 September

Dear Parent/carers

I want to begin with praise for our students - their response to these unprecedented and difficult times that have changed their school experience in so many ways has been inspiring. Most seem genuinely pleased to be back and are a delight to spend time with.

As these early days of term go by the new routines are becoming more established. We have made some changes already and will continue to do so where we can improve arrangements. Our measures to reduce the risk of transmission centre on keeping the different year groups separate for lessons and break-times, staggered start and finish times, one-way routes so that only rarely is anybody passing others face to face, good ventilation of classrooms, good hand hygiene and strong awareness-raising of these measures and why they are important.

It has been encouraging to see so many students equipped with their own hand sanitiser and using it frequently. Some students and staff are choosing to wear a face covering. We have not made this compulsory for all but keep this under review and will introduce it as an additional measure should we feel it would be helpful.

One area of difficulty is supervising so many students who continue to arrive early onto site. This will become more problematic when the weather becomes colder and wetter. Please aim for arrival for Y9 and Y10 between 8.35 and 8.45am and for Y11 and Y13 between 8.55 and 9.05am. From Monday we are reinstating tutor time from 8.45am for all Y12 students.

Students can now pre-order school lunch - this is working well.

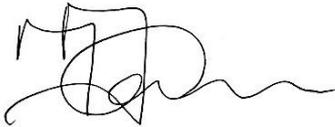
Looking ahead, we do not plan to hold our traditional face to face subject consultation events this term so as not to bring lots of parent/carers into school and to reduce the number of face to face contacts for staff. This is regrettable and I do hope they can be reinstated for the spring term. Progress reports will still be issued and where there are concerns teachers will be in contact by phone.

As of today we have not had any positive Covid tests. I would inform you if this was the case. I include below the latest advice if a student is unwell including how to access a test.

These are challenging times for everybody. We are aiming to provide the best learning experience for students while reducing the risk of transmission of the virus. Throughout these six months your support for Vandyke Upper School has been strong and hugely appreciated. Your feedback, whether positive or pointing out where we can do better, is important and always considered carefully. Please keep it coming in and do not hesitate to make contact if you have any questions.

Finally, we have spoken to all students this afternoon about two incidents in the area where a man has asked a student to get into his car. These incidents have been reported to the police but it is important that all students are alert to this danger and report anything suspicious. We have advised walking to and from school with friends and certainly never getting into a car of somebody you do not know.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Carroll', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tim Carroll