

11 October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing as we approach half-term week starting on 23 October. School resumes on Monday 30 October. It has been a really positive start to the school year with students settled and working well and a lovely atmosphere around school. Last week we held our Open Evening which was very well attended and we have welcomed a large number of families this week on our Open Mornings which continue next week.

Year 9

The school uses Google Classroom to record homework as well as some in-class activities and students have been issued with their individual login details. Parents are able to view the work that has been set for their child by activating a Google Guardian account and an invitation to do so will be sent to Year 9 parents next week.

Year 11

Year 11 students have English and maths exams on Thursday and Friday next week and should be preparing carefully for this with revision. After school revision runs every week for English on Mondays and for maths on Tuesdays – all are welcome.

Sixth Form Open Evening 2 November

On Thursday 2 November Year 11 students and parents/carers are invited to our Sixth Form Open evening from 6pm. The evening comprises short talks in the theatre by Mrs Quinn, Director of Sixth Form and myself, and the opportunity to visit subject areas to talk to teachers to find out more about the courses from which students will be choosing. The Sixth Form prospectus will be available on the night.

Pastoral support

Students have access to a lot of support through their tutors and year teams. We have a school counsellor and learning mentors as well as teaching assistants all of whom support the individual needs of students. We are fortunate to have the additional support of two CAMHS workers based for some of the week with us. A leaflet attached to this email includes information as to how to access this.

Safeguarding

Mrs Ruston retired as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the summer after many years of outstanding service to our students. Mrs Sides has joined us in the DSL role and is enjoying her new role having previously been an Assistant Headteacher at Queensbury in Dunstable.

The school rightly prides itself on its approach to bullying. Every student should feel safe and welcome in school. I know how hard staff work to ensure that this is the case. Students know who

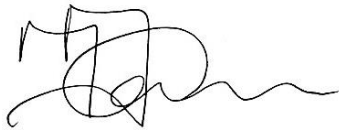
they should speak to if they have a particular concern including about bullying. Students can also use the tellme@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk email to report a concern as an alternative to speaking in person to a member of staff. These come directly to me and senior colleagues and will always generate a prompt response.

Vaping

Regrettably vaping has become popular with some young people and on occasions we have found evidence of students vaping in the school toilets. Vaping is not permitted in school and all students have been made fully aware of this. We will be taking additional measures to prevent vaping in toilet areas by installing detectors.

If you have any questions about these or any further matters please contact office@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk.

Yours sincerely

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

Tim Carroll

Headteacher