

10 November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Students have returned well from the half-term break and we are fully in the swing of an important half-term leading up to Christmas. We have *Smile Week*, the school production of "School of Rock", Christmas dinner and lots more to look forward to in these busy few weeks.

Year 11 students sat practice exams in English and maths and will sit a full set of mock exams in December and Year 13 have sat practice exams in all of their subjects. The information gained from these exams helps inform students as to where to focus their efforts of improvement and supports teachers by providing feedback on how effectively students are learning and where necessary changing teaching plans to close any gaps in knowledge.

Year 12 Evening on 15 November

On Wednesday 15 November we hold our Year 12 evening. There are talks at 5pm about apprenticeships and work-related careers choice and at 6pm about university and making applications for higher education. We look forward to meeting Year 12 parents/carers and students on Wednesday.

Year 9 Evening on 16 November

On Thursday 16 November we hold our Year 9 evening. This comprises a short talk in the theatre with myself and Mrs Moody, Director of Year 9, a meeting with the tutor and then short sessions in English and Science. This is an important event and we look forward to meeting all Year 9 parents/carers and students on Thursday.

Safeguarding

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*** 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 have installed vaping detectors in some toilet areas as a pilot and will extend this if it proves productive.

Parking

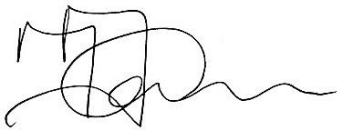
I write again about car parking on site. Car park spaces are limited and managed expertly by our site team and duty staff. We have a system of permits for staff and Sixth Form drivers (Year 13 only) and employ double parking using some spaces on grassed areas to increase capacity. We will shortly have transferred to the school nine acres of land to the east of the school and some of this will become overflow parking. This however is not yet in place and will not be so for some while. My plea to all users of the site is to drive slowly because we have children on bikes and pedestrians using the footpaths and crossing the car park areas at time. But also for all users of the site to be considerate of others in terms of being patient, not blocking entry points and exits, and respecting that the disabled bays are reserved for those who need them.

Advice and guidance

We signpost students and parents/carers to a range of external agencies who provide excellent information, advice and guidance about a range of health matters. These are widely posted up around school, are in the weekly bulletin and on the school website. Also attached to this email is a further list of agencies who can provide mental health support.

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 flourish extending to the right.

Tim Carroll

Headteacher