

23<sup>rd</sup> November

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Parents' Evenings – Autumn Term 2020**

Parents' Evenings have long been an important feature of our school calendar; their loss is one more significant consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of our students has now been the subject of an individual report and in normal times that would be material for discussion at a Parents' Evening.

With any large gathering of parents being out of the question for the time being, we have been looking at alternative ways of making such discussions possible. As so many activities are now taking place on-line, it seemed natural to explore the possibility of booking appointments for parents and staff to meet virtually. This has already been done by a number of schools.

Their experience, we find, has not been encouraging. Although live parents' evenings also work on a system of appointments, we all know that their timing is seldom precise in practice. Parents become adept in juggling bookings, queues and vacancies to make efficient use of everybody's time. That is not possible on-line and schools which have experimented with such a system have not been pleased with the service that they were able to offer.

We have decided, at least for this term, to rely on telephone conversations. Over the next two weeks the tutors of each student in Years 8 to 11 will ring home to open a general discussion about progress achieved and any barriers to progress in the future. This may be sufficient in itself; if it is not the tutor can set up a more focussed discussion - again, over the phone – with the teacher concerned.

For sixth formers the scheme will be somewhat different. Parents can expect to hear from one of the specialists teaching each of the student's exam courses. These conversations, in turn, may become the gateway to speaking with other members of the sixth form staff.

Finally, I will repeat what I have frequently said to our students when writing to them about remote learning: the teaching staff are available and if you have reason to contact them directly by email, then this is what you should do.

Let us hope that between us we can provide the flow of informed support which we know to be so important.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters