

8th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coronavirus Update 35

South African Variant of COVID-19

As many of you will know only too well, the South African variant of the COVID-19 virus has been identified within the school's catchment area. The part of WR9 concerned lies between Copcut and the northern bypass of Worcester city. It is not densely populated, but with Droitwich to the north and Worcester to the south, it is very close to areas which most certainly are.

This does not have any direct effect on our arrangements at the high school. These remain the same during the week ahead as they were in the week just ended. The development is, however, a reminder to each one of us that we are in a situation which could alter very rapidly. Please join us in impressing upon your children that the need for safe behaviour remains as strong as ever.

Two weeks ago I mentioned that we were about to experiment with an online replacement for conventional parents' evenings. We have now done this for the parents of Year 12 and will try a similar system with the parents of Year 9 during the week ahead. Other year groups will follow on the dates already announced in letter No. 33. Once all the year groups have used the system we should be keen to gather your opinions of it, but in the meantime I would welcome any impressions that you would like to share. Please send them, however brief, to office@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk.

Awarding of Grades for GCSE and A Level Exams in 2021

Some remarks made by members of Year 11 leave me to return to the important subject of the 2021 GCSE and A-level exams. The lack of a clear plan as to how candidates will be graded is frustrating for us all, but three certainties do stand out.

1. The system of assessment by subject teachers used in 2020 will not apply in 2021.
2. The scheme for 2021 will rely – and probably to a considerable extent – on some form of assessment or test.
3. These assessments or tests will be set during the next three or four months and it is likely that we will have some say over their content.

The long and short of this is that, even now, the die is still not cast. Every one of our candidates goes into these final months with the possibility of improving their situation. No one has reason to despair.

The next set Year 11 and Year 13 PPEs may become part of the final assessment. Currently we intend to delay the exams scheduled for February and early March until the government makes that clear one way or another and the candidates know where they stand.

#WinnerWinnerNotASchoolDinner

The winner of the #WinnerWinnerNotASchoolDinner competition last week was Beth Meakin in Year 12. Beth's photograph of her budgie assisting her work at home has already been widely shared. We are grateful to Spa Decorators for sponsoring the winner's takeaway.

This week there will be two winners. The first competition will be to find the most appetising sandwich. Photographs – and please, not sandwiches – should be sent to kindness@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk by 2 pm on Friday, 12th February. The second will come from among the students whose work has featured in the Gallery during this lockdown with the winner being drawn randomly from the best 25 contributions.

The prizes will again be a meal from a local takeaway for the winner's family, delivered on Friday evening.

With good wishes to you and your families.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Waters