



## **From the Headmaster: Weekly Update 05/11/21**

Dear Parents

We were delighted to see pupils back in school this week after the half term break. The number of those testing positive has diminished within the school and 65% of pupils in the 11-15 age group received their first vaccination in school last month. Others will now be able to obtain the vaccine from local external providers.

Senior school success in the swimming pool and on the netball court this week has established positive sporting momentum for the second half of term. We look forward to further good news in the weeks ahead. KS2 pupils in the Junior School took part in House Cross Country this week, whilst KS1 pupils held the first of their 'class seasonal shows' this morning – with a live audience! Preparations for Christmas performances and events are now well under way in both junior and senior schools and we look forward to being able to welcome all parents back into school to enjoy them in person.

We have decided to extend the requirement to wear masks in the senior school – and for parents at drop off and pick in the junior school - in the immediate future. Their reintroduction in the first half of term coincided with a marked reduction in positive tests and we think it likely that the measure will enhance our chances of getting through to the end of term without interruption.

Pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 should note that plans for external examinations this summer are progressing. It certainly seems to be the intention that GCSEs and A- Level exams should not be replaced with Teacher Assessed Grades again, although the content and coverage of the papers is likely to be reduced to compensate for the second national lockdown after last Christmas.

We are looking forward to our second senior school Open Day tomorrow morning which will be conducted in accordance with the same constraints as applied to the first such event in September: all visitors will be required to present evidence of a recent negative test and numbers have been limited to minimise the risk of reintroducing the virus to the school community.

Combined with the requirement to keep classrooms well ventilated, this week's drop in temperature has, as predicted, rendered classrooms somewhat colder than usual. We will therefore permit pupils to wear outdoor coats in class if they wish between now and the end of term.

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Looking ahead to next week, one of the highlights will undoubtedly be the return of Old Colfeian Charlie Whittaker who will be talking to senior science students about his recent experience in the Imperial College Covid Response team, led by Professor Neil Ferguson. Charlie has co-authored a number of the academic papers produced by the team, many of which have fed directly into government policy over the last year and a half. His [most recent publication](#) relates to the management of the pandemic in Brazil and reflects his particular interest in the impact of the pandemic elsewhere in the world.

With best wishes to all

Richard Russell  
Headmaster

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