



---

## From the Headmaster: Weekly Update – 11/02/22

Dear Parents

After careful consideration we have decided to remove the compulsory requirement for senior school pupils to wear masks after half term although those who wish to continue wearing masks will be welcome to continue to do so. This decision is provisional and we will continue to monitor infection rates with care, reintroducing the mask regime if it becomes necessary to do so. As things stand, however, the level of infection within the whole school is heading very much in the right direction and it seems possible that the requirement to isolate for those who test positive may be subject to political review before too long.

It has been another busy week in school. Major events included the House Music Competition in the senior school, which was hugely enjoyable and suitably uproarious, and victory for the U14 girls' football team against Bexley Grammar. Senior school pupils also performed extremely well in the London Schools cross-country championships, coming second in both A and B team competitions. Other key events of the week included the re-enactment of the Great Fire of London in the junior school playground by Year 1.

Parents may have seen the story on the front page of the Sunday Times last week in which it was reported that some independent schools appear to have "gamed" the system last summer when submitting teacher assessed grades at A level, generating an A\* bonanza which defied gravity. This is not what happened at Colfe's where the A\* statistic last summer was 32.9%. Although this is a significant increase on the 18.5% figure in 2019 the cohort was a remarkably strong one which included ten students who won places at Oxford and Cambridge. I am confident that our heads of department, overseen by the academic leadership of the school, behaved with the utmost integrity throughout the process. An element of inflation is inevitable when teachers are obliged to grade the work of their own pupils and that is what happened in the great majority of schools in both state and independent sectors.

Looking ahead to the exams this coming summer, we think it highly probable that results will not be determined by teacher assessment. The information provided by Ofqual earlier this week was relatively useful and heads of department in the senior school are adapting schemes of work to take account of the syllabus reduction that has been applied in some areas.

For now, however, I hope that all pupils will have a restful and enjoyable half term and I look forward to seeing everybody back in school on the 21<sup>st</sup> February.

Best wishes to all

Richard Russell  
Headmaster