



Dear Parents and Carers,

With another full term over and the summer term just the other side of the Easter Holidays, I'm struck by how fast the school year flows past us with all its milestones marking the passing of another term. I wanted to write to you firstly to say how tremendously proud I am of the exceptional cast and crew of Oliver. All four of the performances were outstanding and all of the staff and young people involved are to be congratulated. With over 120 staff and students involved, the school production is a true testament to what we can achieve when we work together.

Key Dates

As we move into the summer term, I wanted to share a few key dates with you.

Tuesday 22 nd April	Return to school after the Easter break
Monday 5 th May	Bank Holiday
Thursday 8 th May	The start of the GCSE exams
Monday 12 th May	The start of A Level Exams
Monday 26 th May to Friday 30 th May	Half Term
Thursday 12 th June	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 18 th June	The last GCSE exam (contingency day is 25 th June)
Thursday 19 th June	Parents' Forum (online)
Friday 20 th June	The last A Level exam
Monday 23 rd June	Year 10 and Year 12 mocks start (finishing Thursday 3 rd July)
Tuesday 24 th June	Year 11 and 13 Alton towers celebration trip
Friday 27 th June	Year 11 Leavers' assembly in the morning & prom in the evening
Tuesday 1 st July	Year 7 Induction day & Induction evening (and uniform sale on site)
Wednesday 2 nd July	Year 7 Induction day
Friday 4 th July	INSET day – school closed
Friday 25 th July	Last day of term

Although the summer term inevitably holds all the events around exams, we are also planning a range of trips and activities for all years in school in the final weeks of the school year, including Aberystwyth for the Year 10 Geographers, Year 12 induction day and Year 10 taster day for the 6th Form, various careers events and our third annual summer activities week for Years 7 to 10, not to mention Sports day and work experience before school ends on Friday 25th July.

Uniform

As the summer term approaches and the weather improves, we always see a change in the uniform students are wearing; please may I remind you that skirts which appear long enough with thick black tights on might be too short when tights are replaced by socks. I would also like to remind you that students are expected to wear their blazers to and around school. They are, of course allowed to take them off in hot classrooms and when they're running around at lunch times, however, we do expect to see blazers worn by all students.

Mobile Phones

Finally, I would like to address a subject that has been in the media a lot recently; that of students' access to mobile phones in school. Our policy is that **phones should not be seen or heard in school**, with an expectation that they are **kept safely in school bags** during the day. The discussion around the impact mobile phones have on our children's concentration and wellbeing has focused on the dangers of young people becoming overly dependent on their phone and social media and that rather than keeping them connected, this isolates them and can be very problematic for their mental health.

Our recent parent survey highlighted concerns about mixed messages with phones as sometimes students have used phones in class for quizzing and surreptitiously in lessons especially with supply staff.

Changes with phone sanctions

When we return from the Easter Break, **phones will not be used at all for learning in school**. Teachers have been informed of this. Supply teachers will be reminded.

Most of our young people have adhered to our policy with phones. Unfortunately, for some students the sanction we have had in place has not been of sufficient deterrent to the use/visibility in school. We are seeing too many phones being used in class and at breaks times, often stored in pockets for easy access.

We are now increasing the sanctions after Easter; on the **first occasion, the phone will be confiscated and a 4pm detention will be issued**, after which the student will be able to collect their phone. On a **second occasion, the phone will also be confiscated and 4pm detention issued; however, parents will be asked to come into school to collect the phone at their convenience**. If students are worried about the safety of their phones in their school bags, we have some lockers which are still available. Locker letters can be collected from main Reception.

To be clear, we are not banning phones from school. I know that for some parents, children having a phone for journeys to and from school is important. Phones remain in bags and switched off for the school day. Once out of the school gates, children may use their phones.

I would like to encourage you to have a conversation with your child about how much they need their phones and ask you to support the school by not texting or calling your child while they are in school. If you need to contact your child, please call Reception and Student Support will get a message to them. Likewise, if your child needs to contact you for an urgent matter, school will supervise and facilitate this.

Please note that sixth formers are permitted to use their phones in the common room and lesson if directed by staff.

I look forward to welcoming the longer days and the sunshine in the summer term and supporting our exam years, as well as continuing the journey with our other years in the coming term.

Warm regards,



Heidi Gale
Headteacher