



Winterton Community Academy

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Headteacher – Mr K Rowlands

Ref:O/KRParLet/Halfterm/jsn

28th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to start once again by saying thank you, to all of our students and to you as their parents, for your patience and support and for the way in which they have responded to the significant challenges that they faced.

We are slowly transitioning back to our normal routines and also, our expectations and standards. We have in recent weeks allowed our teachers to return to their normal classroom environment and allowed students to transition more freely around the school. I am delighted with the way our students have responded and the school environment has felt calm and positive. I am conscious that we have also had to respond to some staff absence, which has been as a direct consequence of COVID and naturally, this has an impact on our students. Thankfully, I anticipate that after half-term, we will again be fully staffed and I think it is a credit to the students and to the colleagues within the school who have supported additional lessons to try and keep any disruption to a minimum.

In terms of teaching and learning, the disruption of the past twelve months has meant that often, we have to take quite a teacher led approach, instructing from the front. We have also been operating on 50 minute lessons, which, whilst being a success, does mean that teachers have less time to creatively engage students. As restrictions ease, we are conscious of this and we are looking forward to being able to broaden our approach once again. As a result, upon our return after half-term, we will be able to return to one hour lessons and the extended transitional breaks will cease. Students will have 5 minutes to move on to their next lesson as has traditionally been the case. We ask that students remain vigilant in safeguarding against the risks of COVID and that they sanitise their hands frequently, continue to test and also, that they continue to socially distance.

With regards to assessment, our Year 11 students have been working tirelessly to best demonstrate the level to which they are working and for staff, this is a highly challenging process, to try and ensure that the required evidence is in line with what remains an ambiguous approach nationally. I am confident our staff have done everything possible to ensure our Year 11 students are awarded the grades they deserve and we appreciate that this will remain subject to further moderation and national benchmarking. Some year 11 students will still be asked to return to school to complete some final pieces of work, but for the most part, they are now at the stage where they have done all that they can and we are very much looking forward to celebrating with them in their upcoming leavers assembly and celebration event.

Throughout the rest of the school, we have maintained a focus on ensuring that we assess on a regular basis, to continue to monitor, support and feedback to our students on the progress they are making. I am conscious it has been difficult to provide parents with meaningful feedback over the past twelve months, but we will now endeavour to engage with you and share as much information as we can to ensure you have a good understanding as to how your child is doing.

We will continue to use the information we gather from these assessments, to support their learning and prioritise accordingly to ensure that they are on track. I do believe that for most of our students, they have taken responsibility and with the help of zoom lessons, they have continued to make good progress, however where it is needed, we will provide students with additional support and intervention.

Moving into the final half-term, there are a number of developments within school and you will receive separate communications relating to these, including our plans for pastoral support and tutor groups.

We are also working on defining some clear expectations and boundaries / consequences to ensure that our students have absolute clarity on what we expect from them in terms of their behaviour and attitudes in school. This will include the reintroduction of one-hour after school detentions, particular for negative behaviours which are deliberate choices. This will include bad language, littering and being out of bounds as it is our commitment to ensure that the school environment is a positive one, for all students to enjoy. Further information will be shared with students on their return from half-term.

One area of focus within the school is to promote an awareness of equality and diversity. We have unfortunately on some occasions experienced examples of prejudice attitudes and behaviours, specifically relating to gender, race, sexuality and disability. Whilst we understand that young people are learning, it is essential that they develop an understanding of what is acceptable and expected of them, not just in school but throughout society. So whilst we will always aim to educate and support our students, to help them develop positive values, we will take a very strong stance on any young person who is repeatedly demonstrating any prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes or behaviours. You can support the school and your child by helping to raise awareness of the importance of equality and diversity and help to ensure that your child has a good understanding.

Finally, during the time when students were located in their bubble classrooms, we were unable to make full use of the 'Track-it Light' system, for behaviour and rewards. This was a technical issue due to the way we were allowing staff to hot-desk, to ensure they could quickly log in and commence with the lesson. Now that teachers are back in their classrooms, we will be able to make full use of the system once again. This is a really effective way for us to monitor and reward positive behaviours and these points usually inform our end of term reward assemblies. This term, we have held our reward assemblies, based on teacher recommendations and it has been lovely to see so many students receiving certificates and prizes as a recognition for all of their hard work. The reward assemblies are a really positive way to end the term and we are very proud of all of their achievements.

Have a lovely half-term.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mr Rowlands', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr Rowlands
Headteacher