

3 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Academic Year 2021-2022

I hope your child has had an enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday and is looking forward to their return to Kingsmead. I am delighted to inform you that, once again, students at Kingsmead have achieved very good results in 2021 – details are available on the website.

I would like to remind you of our plans for welcoming all students and staff back in September 2021. We look forward to a return to more normal on site arrangements.

Return to site dates and testing

All secondary school students should receive 2 on site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return to school. To enable this, the start of term is staggered with year groups returning on the following dates:

Wednesday 8 September – Years 7 & 11

Thursday 9 September – Years 7, 8, 10 & 11

Friday 10 September – All students

Testing is voluntary and your child will not be tested unless you (or another parent/carer) have given consent. We strongly encourage you and your child to take part. However, your child will not be stopped from returning to Kingsmead if you do not give consent.

Coronavirus-related arrangements

To reduce the risk of coronavirus related transmission at Kingsmead, the following will remain critical:

1. Good hygiene for everyone. Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should be regular practice. A 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is also required.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes. Regular cleaning of areas and equipment remains vital.

CARE

ASPIRATION

RESPECT

DETERMINATION

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3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated. We will continue to open external windows to improve natural ventilation, and open internal doors to assist with creating a throughput of air.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19. Students and staff should not come to school if displaying Covid symptoms or if they have had a positive test result. Existing procedures for managing confirmed cases will remain in place.

Moving forward

The last 18 months has been a turbulent time for everyone. We now want to refocus on our core purpose as a school and ensure students are ready to make the most of the opportunities available to them, developing attributes in line with the school values: **Care, Aspiration, Respect and Determination**, to give them the qualities to succeed.

At Kingsmead, we believe in **“Achieving through Caring”**. Our educational philosophy is a simple one; that as a school we have a duty of care to look after the well-being and development of every child, whatever their ability or circumstance; to give all students the tools to access a fulfilling life, realise their potential and prepare them to play their part in society. A **triangle of partnership** is the lynchpin formed between school, students and parents/carers to support students to make the best possible choices.

Positive Behaviour for Learning

All students have the right to learn, and staff have the right to carry out their roles in a calm, purposeful and well-ordered environment. To achieve this, staff have a professional responsibility to plan and support learning that is enjoyable, engages students and helps them make progress. Equally, we expect students to approach learning with a positive attitude, showing care and respect for others.

Last year we carried out a significant review of our behaviour policies and practices. As a result of this review, a new ‘Relationships and Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy’ will be in place from Wednesday 8th September. We are confident that the new policy will provide clarity and consistency about our core expectations and any consequences when students fail to meet those expectations.

The policy focuses on the importance of our core values and the fostering of positive relationships. It also sets out some key expectations for students in relation to:

- Positive behaviour for learning in the classroom
- Positive behaviour for citizenship as a school community

The key expectations are to:

- Be safe
- Be respectful, kind and caring
- Be prepared and ready to learn
- Engage positively
- Aspire to do your very best

We will be highlighting more details of these expectations with students from the start of term, as well as informing them about the clear consequences if they do not meet our expectations.

We will also be sharing with staff the expectations we have in relation the fair and consistent management of relationships and positive behaviour.

We are looking forward to the launch of this new policy and are confident that it will further enable all students to focus on enjoying learning, engaging in school life and thriving across the school.

Teaching and Learning

We believe that quality teaching is achieved with passion and energy, producing experiences that inspire and challenge, and provide opportunities for young people to take charge of their own learning. Learners need to be encouraged to ensure that they are making the most of every single opportunity. Ultimately, this can only be achieved if students feel safe and cared for. This value of “**Achieving through Caring**” will be an integral part of initiatives and strategies implemented for every student at Kingsmead School.

Our clear and consistent routines ensure learning time is productive and positive and this year we are further developing our teaching strategies to encourage participation by all students to ensure everyone is engaging in and developing their learning fully. A range of learning activities alongside periods of silent working and a variety of questioning techniques will be evident in all lessons to ensure all students achieve their potential.

We are excited to launch a brand-new initiative this year across Years 7-9. Our Tutor Reading Programme will take place twice a week in afternoon registration where tutors will read aloud to their tutees, who will follow along with a copy of the text. The act of reading is one of the best ways in which you can improve academic performance over the long term. Tutors will model fluent, passionate reading so that students are exposed to countless words and phrases not found in everyday dialogue - covering a wealth of themes and topics. A list of books can be found on Firefly.

In Year 7 all students will be provided with a Knowledge Organiser folder containing a Knowledge Organiser and a yellow exercise book. Knowledge Organisers contain the key knowledge for all subjects and will be the primary resource for Home Learning. Students will focus on five self-quizzing techniques to develop their independent study skills followed by low-stakes quizzes in class to monitor the learning, which is essential for building student confidence in their own academic success. The QR code in the Knowledge Organiser leads to a Firefly page containing videos and further information. The Knowledge Organiser folder must be brought to school every day and lost folders will need to be purchased through ParentPay for £2.

Attendance

Following two academic years of disruption, excellent attendance at school has never been more important. At Kingsmead, we place a high focus on attendance and, as such, have an expectation that all students will strive to exceed our academy target of 95%. We have recently updated our policy, which can be found on our website, that reflects this essential element of school life. ***By raising your child's attendance, you are raising their chances.***

Widespread research indicates that children who attend school regularly achieve better outcomes, not just academically, but also in skill sets such as resilience, adaptability and perseverance, consequently giving them a better chance of success in life. Punctuality and good attendance are essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education, as well as ensuring safeguarding needs are met.

BYOD

As a rural school, students feel safer travelling to and from school with mobile devices. Our policy states that students will keep phones/ devices turned off, in their bags at all times, unless requested by staff to use them in lessons. I would ask you to remind your son/daughter of the need to take this on board to avoid any unnecessary conflict.

Uniform

Firstly, thank you to parents/carers who continue to support us by ensuring their child has the correct uniform. We appreciate the support in achieving and maintaining our uniform expectations. Please check the school uniform and dress code on our website for full details.

In particular, as highlighted in July, we would like to specifically highlight;

- Plain black v neck jumper with logo (**not a sweatshirt**)
- Skirts should be a plain dark grey, tailored 'A' line skirt which **must reach the knee**
- Shoes will need to be plain black, have no more than a half inch heel and be of a polishable material.
- **Black** socks (all)
- No extreme hairstyles; for example, two-tone, shaved styles with patterns in, dyed hair of an unnatural colour
- One watch, **one** small discreet ring, **one** plain necklace, **one** plain bracelet.
- **Stud** jewellery – no more than **two** in each ear and **one** small nose **stud**
- **No other piercings are allowed**
- Excessive make up is not allowed **i.e. false eyelashes**

Thank you for your co-operation in meeting these requirements and for sending your children to school in uniform that is appropriate for a school environment; by doing so we can avoid any unnecessary conversations being required at the start of a busy new term. We intend to undergo a review of uniform policy in this academic year.

School Transport

The government guidance continues to recommend that students should wear face coverings when travelling on school and public transport. Please could I, therefore, request that all students when travelling to and from school by bus, make sure that they wear a mask when on board. Please check the latest COVID guidance before travel commences at [COVID-19 School transport guidance \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19/school-transport-guidance)

Opportunities

We are driven to provide your child the very best opportunities available. Experiences outside of the classroom are just as important as those within it. The aim is to see all of our extra-curriculum opportunities back up running and better than ever in 2021-2022.

Finally

I will be in contact in October asking you to take part in a parent/carers survey on how we can improve the school together.

Most importantly, students have access to a world of opportunity. It is our responsibility to enable them to take advantage and fulfil their potential to be the best they can be whether that is in the classroom, on the sports field, on the stage or any platform of their choosing.

Best wishes

Mark Williams

Mark Williams
Head Teacher