



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

9 September 2020

Dear Parents,

It has been really wonderful here having the pupils back. I am conscious that you have received quite a lot of communications from the College in the past week or so and I apologise for any overload. At the beginning of a school year, with quite a few special arrangements, we wanted to keep you fully informed.

I have been extremely pleased by the way the pupils have responded to the new systems to keep us Covid resilient and grateful for your support with that, not least in stumping up face-coverings at very short notice. I spoke to every year group separately about the importance of keeping to our rules while at the same time feeling confident with their own safety and ability to enjoy school life. At the same time I took the opportunity to encourage pupils to talk to the adults here if they had any anxieties or worries. Hsms have been underscoring these messages.

The enthusiasm with which your children have approached lessons as well as simply being back at school among friends has been excellent. Our new pupils have been very impressive and we will continue to do everything we can to make sure they feel totally immersed in the community over the coming weeks.

I very much appreciate your support with Saturday activities. Even though we are obliged to work up slowly to a full provision for your children, it is great to get them into the habit of taking all these opportunities. We look forward to seeing you at our scheduled parents meetings which have been moved to Saturday dates; this may alter the provision for pupils on those days. However, it won't be *too* long before your Saturday afternoons will see you clasping a hot paper cup of tea on a freezing side-line watching your children learn to meet with triumph and disaster (and treat those imposters just the same).

In the light of further government tightening of restrictions, we have reluctantly had to take the decision to postpone our big musical showcase *Les Miserables* until next year. But all is not lost! We will aim to deliver a smaller-scale production that ensures our Year 13 pupils have an opportunity to perform, hopefully with cabaret-style seating for guests in their family bubbles and we will film the production. We will continue to create opportunities for all of our aspiring actors in other year groups to perform. Year 12 will have an opportunity in February and Year 9 are working towards their house drama productions and a scholars' performance after Christmas.

I am reassured to be able to report that we had a successful early test run of our systems with a pupil with some symptoms reacting very sensibly and going home to isolate and get a test promptly. As a precaution, we isolated the pupils in closest contact in the house. Within 48 hours the test came back negative and we were able to get all those involved back without missing a significant amount of school. We are well prepared as we cope with similar instances and I am grateful to pupils and parents for accepting without any panic that this is now an inevitable part of getting on with our lives.

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You may wish to have a look through some pictures of last year now that our new Highlights Booklet is available as an online flipbook: <https://online.flipbuilder.com/hfar/tutd/>. Please feel free to pass on to any families you know who are looking for schools – nothing is more successful for our recruitment than parents spreading the word!

Thank you again for all your support in getting the pupils back and happily engaged with school life.
With very best wishes



Tom Lawson
Headmaster