

21<sup>st</sup> October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Re: Autumn Term Update

It has been fantastic to see our students working really hard this half term and in particular, our Year 11s, who have just completed their mock examinations. It's also been great to see the return of lots of the activities such as clubs, trips and sporting fixtures that make our school such an engaging place for students. Here are a few reminders for next half term.

### Attendance and punctuality

The Department for Education has made it very clear that all students are now expected to be in school, the new Secretary of State for Education has said that this is one of his top priorities. Whilst the vast majority of students at SSA have very good attendance, we do notice that some students miss too much school. We are currently reviewing the way we follow this up and as a result will be alerting parents much sooner if your child's attendance starts to slip. 90% attendance actually means missing a day a fortnight, this has a significant impact on academic progress (evidence suggests it means achieving on average a whole grade less in every GCSE they take). If your child feels slightly unwell, has a mild cold or sore tummy, etc. you should send them to school as they are usually ok. If you wish, you can write a note in their planner and if they feel worse during the day we will let you know so you can collect them if necessary.

Likewise, it is important students get to school on time, this means by 8.35am. For those who use public transport please ensure they allow enough time for potential delays. School is now open much earlier so students have somewhere warm and safe to read or do some work. Breakfast is available from 8am to 8.30am, this is free for students who receive free school meals and porridge is free for everyone. Full menus can be accessed via [Lunch Menus](#).

### Information evenings

It has been great finally meet lots of parents in person at the recent information evenings for Year 10 and Year 11. Feedback from these evenings was excellent, however not all parents attended. We know that students are more successful at school when parents work

with us and are aware of all the things that are happening in the school. We have therefore created a very brief follow-up questionnaire asking for any feedback about how we can increase attendance at these events, please complete the survey here: [Year 10 / Year 11 Information Evening Feedback Survey](#)

## **Covid Update**

Fortunately, we have had relatively few cases in school recently, however we know that nationally secondary school age students are a highly infected group. Please remember to continue with twice weekly testing and to let the school know immediately of any positive results.

You should have now received a letter about Covid vaccinations from the NHS immunisation team who will be carrying out the vaccinations. Please remember that the school is only providing the venue for these and can't offer any advice about the vaccinations. The government have produced information for parents and carers, which you can read here: [COVID-19 vaccination programme for young people: guidance for parents](#)

There is also information for 12–17-year-olds, which you can read with your child: [COVID-19 vaccination – A guide for children and young people](#)

## **Covid Vaccination Dates**

Grosvenor Road – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November

Upton Lane – Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November

## **Key Dates**

We return from half-term on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November. Term finishes on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December, which will be an early finish at 12.20pm.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November is an INSET day so the school will be closed to students.

Year 11 Parents Evening is on 7<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Reading**

Your child's ability to read widely and often is one of the most important determining factors of how happy, healthy and wealthy they will be in their lives. Improving literacy therefore remains one of our biggest school priorities. We are encouraging reading in school in a variety of ways, for example, all students are required to carry a 'book in their bag', students in years 7-10 take part in a Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R) day every Tuesday. Parents can support in the following ways:

- Encourage your child to read for at least 30 minutes a day
- Take an interest in what your child is reading by asking about plot, characters etc.
- Encourage your child to take a digital break (especially before they sleep) and read a book instead

- Act as a role model - visit the library together and both choose a book.
- Discuss the benefits of reading with your child

### **Website and social media**

Since the launch of the new school website in August 2021, we have seen a significant increase in website user traffic – this means that many more families at SSA and external parties are engaging and reading information present on the site.

If you haven't already done so, please browse our extra-curricular offer with your child over the half term and read our news stories from Autumn Term 1, to stay up to date with our school achievements and resources. We also regularly signpost users to upcoming events and programmes for families in Newham. In terms of social media, Instagram is still our most popular platform and in this term figures alone show that we have reached over 39k users thanks to your likes and shares.

If you haven't done so already, make sure to follow us on your social media channel of choice to stay up to date with regular SSA news and updates. Whether you've forgotten what week we're on, when your parents evening is, when events will be happening in school, or would like to see student achievements celebrated – you can always rely on regular communications via our social media channels.

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

I hope you and your families have a safe and restful half-term break. As always, my thanks for your continuing support of the school.

Best wishes,



Craig Hewitt  
Headteacher