



Biddenham

International School & Sports College

Principal: Mr David Bailey

Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

21st May 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

As you will have seen from our whole school update letter, we have taken the difficult decision to ask Year 11, Year 12 Level 2 and Year 13 students to remain at home next week in order to help reduce transmission of Covid-19. It is important that we share some of the context to this decision and how we will maintain contact with and support for students over the next few weeks.

A Covid-19 variant of concern has been identified in Bedford Borough and infection rates are increasing rapidly. Currently this stands at 128 in every 100,000 and has led to other schools in the borough having to take action, including one secondary school having to close all year groups. Unfortunately, infection rates are also highest in specific areas associated with Biddenham and this week we have had to send home over 70 students to self-isolate for 10 days; nearly 30% of Year 11. We now have 9 cases (one just came in as we write this letter), and the rate of increase is more than doubling every 5 days. We also know that transmission tends to be higher in older students due to greater social mixing outside school and hospital admissions in younger age groups are higher now than at any time in the pandemic. We really hope you can appreciate that this is not a decision that was taken lightly.

It is fair to say that we are all - students, teachers and parents - unhappy to end so abruptly. However, although this is disappointing, particularly at the end of courses, there is still much we can do to support students and also some lovely events to look forward to - Covid restrictions permitting. Firstly, for the few students who still have assessments to do, arrangements will be made to conduct them remotely. This will be organised with students directly, if it has not been done so already. These will be done via google meet and students will receive email invitations to the assessments. If students are aware of a missed assessment please contact george.foy@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 11 and alan.brown@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 12 and 13 with any queries.

In terms of remote learning and academic support we have created two Biddenham Diplomas, one aimed at Year 11 and Year 12 Level 2 transition to further study, A Levels and training and one geared more towards preparation for university and the wider world of work for Year 13. These diplomas can be accessed remotely and will be shared on the relevant year group google classrooms on Monday. We will also be sharing subject specific transition to Level 3 work with students over the week, again via google classrooms. Our careers support will also continue remotely either through google meets or by telephone. Please contact rachel.purvis@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 11 and beverley.darlow@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 12 and 13 to book appointments.

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We are still planning to hold a number of sixth form taster days and transition activities towards the end of June and then we have results days, which are:

- **AS and A-level, Level 3 BTEC students:** Tuesday 10 August
- **GCSE and BTEC Level 2 students:** Thursday 12 August

Further details regarding the taster days will be shared soon after half term and results days' information at the beginning of July.

So now to the important stuff! As you know we had planned outdoor celebration events for Year 11 and Sixth form for next week, but were not in a position to move them to this Friday due to the short notice of the decision and the appalling weather. There will still be end of term virtual assemblies and we are really hopeful that the sixth form event planned towards the end of June and the Year 11 prom planned for July will still be able to take place. We also have the year books for both Year 11 and Sixth form that will serve as happy reminders of our time together as a Biddenham family.

As you can see there is a great deal that we still need to be working on together, so effective communication is really important. We will communicate directly with students by school email so please remember to keep checking emails as well as google classrooms regularly. Contact details for tutors and support services can be found in the end of term update letters for Year 11 [here](#), and Sixth Form [here](#), and as always you can contact the school by calling on 01234 342521 or by email at enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk.

We end as we began by saying that we are truly sorry to have had to make this difficult decision, it was taken in the interests of everyone's safety and we hope that by taking action now, we will be able to look forward to a more positive year ahead.

Thank you once again for your patience and understanding.



Mr D Bailey
Principal



Ms E Grylls
Head of School