

Weekly News Update Thursday 21 October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

As we reach the tail end of October, the start of term seems like a distant memory I suspect that both the students and the staff are ready for a decent rest and a holiday. It has been a great first half term despite the occasional Covid related restriction. I think it is fair to say that the staff and students have returned to more 'normal' times and although we haven't managed assemblies in person, there has been a lovely buzz and energy around the school. I know all parts of our school community have been pleased to see each other and get back to learning, as well as all the extra-curricular offerings in the school.

However, Covid still remains, so we still need to continue testing regularly to keep the community safe. I know there have been recent incidents which have resulted in some students having to isolate over the half-term break.

The NHS Sussex Community Team have asked us to share information about vaccines, which you can see in the attached documents and links within the school newsletter:

- **NHS Catch Up Clinic - Letter for Parents**
- **Text line for 12 to 15 year olds wanting the COVID-19 vaccine to discuss with the NHS**

I am very aware that many of you have plans for the half term break including trips, as well as family gatherings. As a result, we intend to take quite a cautious stance when we return and parents' evenings will continue to be online. Above all, our aim is to try and ensure that children are in school as much as possible. Please do continue to complete the weekly lateral flow tests and if students are exhibiting any symptoms please do undertake a PCR test which are widely available. In the meantime, may I wish you all an excellent and restful half term break.

[**Correction:** we will be on Week 2 on the timetable when we return and not week 1 as was reported in last week's news update]

Sad News

We were informed this week of the passing of one of our former headmasters, Michael Hoddell. His son contacted us to say that he died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 94. Michael was the headmaster from 1973 and 1992 and we still have staff who remember him fondly. He was one of the longest serving Heads in Dorothy Stringer's history. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time.

Email server issues

Apologies for any inconvenience caused by email issues during the week, which meant some external emails weren't being sent or emails to school were being bounced back. One of the reasons the emails stopped functioning was the sheer amount of messages we send which are automated such as for attendance and achievement points which made Microsoft think we were sending out SPAM. This is not the case as it is brilliant to share the achievements of the students. Until we can find a fix, or an alternative method we are turning off the automated emails. All achievement points will still be logged and processed and can be seen on the SLG.

Clocks Go Back on 31 October!

We'll soon be setting the clocks back an hour and summertime will come to an end. The resources below will help remind children, including teenagers, about road safety and keeping safe in the dark.

Teaching Road Safety: A Guide for Parents

<https://www.rospa.com/media/documents/road-safety/teaching-road-safety-a-guide-for-parents.pdf>

Safety First – Cycling at Night <https://www.cycletraining.co.uk/cycle-training-and-cycle-safety/safety-first-cycling-at-night/>

Road safety teaching resources for children <https://www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/>

Be Bright, Be Seen Poster https://6282.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Be_Bright_Be_Seen-A5-Flyer.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in the Dark <https://firstaidforlife.org.uk/keeping-children-safe-in-dark/>

Mock Exams

Last week I mentioned about mock exams. These will solely be for Year 11's and will take place after half-term. Students in Year 10 will have progress reports but will not sit mocks until the summer (after the main GCSE exams).

Hutchinson Telecommunications Mast

We have been notified of a planning submission for a telecommunications mast on Draxmont Way. The school have submitted our response; parents/carers may wish to comment through the planning portal:

<https://planningapps.brighton-hove.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=R0947DDMKXD00&activeTab=summary>

Key Dates

- **Monday 25 – 29 October:** Half-term break
- **Monday 1 November:** school reopens **Week 2** on the timetable

Key Dates 2021/2022 are on our website: https://public.dorothy-stringer.co.uk/ds/pages/key_dates.aspx

Take care and stay safe.

Matt Hillier