



# THE ECCLESBOURNE SCHOOL

*'Learning Together For The Future'*

Head Teacher  
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## End of Term Letter and Updates

Wednesday 1 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is hard to believe that it is December already, this term seems to have flown by. It has been wonderful to have our school back to normal and to be able to return to the rich and varied diet of curricular and extra-curricular experiences that are part of our traditional Ecclesbourne year.

It is so lovely to walk around school and see students making and cooking in Technology; singing in our choirs and playing in our orchestra, ensembles and bands; playing competitive football, rugby, hockey and netball, taking part in the Debating Society and Mock Trial competition; representing the student voice on our Student Council, working as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Buddy Readers, Prefects, Co-Heads, House Captains and Peer Mentors; taking part in our Year 8 production of 'Little Mermaid', and so much more!

As I write the annual House Play competition is under way with performances for every year group throughout the week. The final takes place on Thursday when the Drama Bowl will be awarded to the winning House. The House Plays are a venerable Ecclesbourne institution and are one of the best examples of how important our extra-curricular and enrichment programme is to our students. Over 300 students are involved this year ably led by our Sixth Form Captains who write, direct, choreograph and produce the plays.

There's much more to come and, over the final weeks of term, we look forward to the **Carols by Candlelight service at St Alkmunds** on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00 and the **Christmas Concert**, on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00

We **break up for the Christmas holidays at 2.40 on Wednesday 22 December**. Our school buses are all booked to arrive early but if any parents or carers need us to supervise their children until the usual end of day at 3.40 then please let us know by calling Reception and we will look after them in the School Library until then.

### **Return to School Mass Covid Testing**

As was the case at the start of this term in September, when students return to school after Christmas we will be delivering a testing programme for students without coronavirus symptoms using COVID-19 lateral flow tests. In line with national guidance, we will test students once as they return to school. After this test on return, pupils should continue to test in line with government guidelines.

Students will continue to be provided with home testing kits so that they can complete lateral flow tests twice weekly at home. The on-site test will take place on the first day students return to school. On their first day in school students will remain with their year group and will be supervised to complete work set by their teachers before returning to normal lessons in the afternoon. It is important that students in Years 11 to 13 bring their school laptops, fully charged as they will need them for the morning activities. Year 10 students will be issued with their new laptops on their return to school.



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## Students will return to school from the date set out below:

Monday 10 January	Year 11, 12 and Year 13*
Tuesday 11 January	Year 7 and Year 8
Wednesday 12 January	Year 9 and Year 10

If you have already provided permission for the school to administer these tests, there is no need for you to do so again. If you have not provided permission and wish to do so please log on to ParentPay and access the Covid consent item on Parentpay.

*\*Year 11 students who have Cambridge National PE examination on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> will be tested first at 9.00am so that they can sit their public exam.*

## Year 11 and Year 13 Mock Examinations

The January Mock Examinations play an important role in providing a true indication of the likely grades each student will achieve in their GCSEs and A Levels this summer. In addition, the mock grades will form an integral part of the targeted teaching and support we will provide to students as they prepare for their final exams.

**Ofqual have published contingency arrangements in the unlikely event that exams are cancelled next summer.** In this event, Teacher Assessed Grades would be used instead. In determining these grades, the upcoming mock examinations would form part of the evidence to support this process. Mocks would not be the only evidence used and grades students receive in their mock examinations are not final Teacher Assessed Grades. But students will want to do their best and so it is therefore imperative that students are well prepared for these examinations and are aware of their importance. In addition to the personal revision that all students should be starting now, staff are guiding students with advice, exams information and links to revision resources. As there will be advance notice from Ofqual in February of what will be examined in summer 2022, teachers have made clear to students what content is to be revised and prepared for the mocks.

In their mock examinations, students will be assessed on a wide range of content that they have been taught, similar to what they will expect in their summer exams, and across the assessment objectives for the qualification. As usual, teachers will mark the assessments in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance. Students taking art and design qualifications will continue to work on their non-exam assessments – no additional assessments are needed.

Study Leave for Year 11 and 13 will be from Monday 17th January until Friday 28th January 2022 inclusive. This has been carefully explained to the students in assembly. A copy of the examination timetables are available on our website found [here](#).



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## Coronavirus – New DfE Guidance

The government has published new guidance on health and safety measures in schools, stating that:

*'Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt. Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.'*

This was already the case here at Ecclesbourne. Therefore, we will continue to take a range of precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff as part of our coronavirus risk assessment. We will continue to operate our existing systems to manage movement around the school site. Signage and staff guidance will continue to emphasise the importance of hand sanitising regularly throughout the day. Teachers and the site team will ensure that there is good ventilation with windows and doors left open for inside spaces. Enhanced cleaning provision will continue. Please provide your child with a face mask for travelling on school buses and to be used in communal spaces.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our parents and carers for your support this term and to wish everyone in the Ecclesbourne community a happy and restful Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

James McNamara

Head Teacher