

The Matthew Arnold School



10th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

First week back

I am delighted with the way the first week back has gone. Students and staff have returned to start the new academic year full of good resolutions, and I am sure you will all join me in hoping that nothing further happens to disrupt the year ahead.

Thank you for your patience with the **uniform** suppliers over the summer. Each year the standard of uniform gets better, and the impression and sense of pride in the school this creates is beyond compare. Please continue to support the school by contacting us as soon as possible if your child has any uniform issues.

Now that we are offering food at both morning and lunch breaks, and there are no different sittings, the **Café** seems very busy indeed. Whilst a 15-minute queue seems interminably long, in fact it is remarkably short for a first week back, especially considering that we have more students now than ever before. Not only will the queues get shorter, the lunchtime is now 50 minutes and students have plenty of time to eat, use the toilets, relax or attend a lunchtime club.

On that note, we are aiming to reintroduce **extra-curricular** clubs with a vengeance, so that there is something on offer for all students most lunchtimes and/or after school. Many PE activities and the year 7 choir have already started; please keep an eye on the website for the full timetable coming soon.

It may seem a long way off, but I need to give you advance notice of an **early start to the October half-term holiday**. The government is changing bank holidays next year to allow for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. Local education authorities have reduced working days for staff in response, and Surrey have opted for Friday, 22nd October to be a holiday.

We will be holding our **Open Evening** on Wednesday, 22nd September - our first in the new building, and the first live school event for the public since early 2020. In order to allow us to get ready for this, we will be finishing teaching at the end of P4 (12.40pm) that day, and resuming the next day starting P2 (9.50am) to allow us to clear up and clean thoroughly. With your permission, children will be allowed to go home early and come in late accordingly.

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Parents will have noticed how busy it is at 3.10pm on the Kingston Road at the **end of the school day**. This always happens at the beginning of the year as the year 7 students find their feet, but we hope that students will make their own way to and from school as soon as possible, where possible. Matters have not been helped by roadworks just over the bridge near Woodthorpe Road just in time for the start of term. I have been unable to find out how long these are in place - if anyone does know, please let me know and I will share it with the community!

To help matters, and to return to normality, we will once again be using **the side entrance to the path** that runs between Kingston Road and Hazel Grove - *in the afternoons only*. The gate will be open between 3.10pm and 3.20pm from Monday 13th September. Please remind your children that this path is used by the public, and particularly by parents and younger children from Buckland School. It is not to be used by students on bicycles, who will be turned back to the Kingston Road Entrance.

I am sure your children will be tired after their first week back. **Homework** timetables will be published next year, which means that homework tasks will be given. Please advise them to rest in advance of the increased challenge!

Finally, a reminder that all staff contact details are available in the **Parent tab of the website**, along with (we hope) a great deal of information if you have questions about school life.

I will be in contact again as the term proceeds, but until then, thank you again for your part in ensuring an extremely positive start to term.

With best wishes

Mary Gould
Headteacher