



21st July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

End of school year

A long letter ahead, I am afraid, so once I have done the introduction I am going to divide it up into sections so that you can prioritise your reading time! Some of it contains news, some of it is more information-sharing.

First of all, though, I hope that you are all well. I want to send my whole-hearted thanks to you all for your incredible support and good advice over this past year and a half. I have learnt more about leadership in this period than in the whole of the last ten years. I hope I have the humility in the future to stand by what I have found to be truly important, and I know I can count on you to let me know if I don't.

I think we all know that Covid has not gone away, and that we are going to learn to live with it, but I do hope that the relaxation of restrictions on Monday brings nothing but positive news into your lives. The experience of seeing friends and family again, in so many cases for the first time in more than a year, is beyond measure.

Part two starts on the next page!

I wish you all an amazing summer, and look forward to working with everyone next year.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Gould".

Mary Gould
Headteacher

July 2021

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Round-up of the academic year 2020-2021

The focus of the year was meant to be the move to the new building, but it did get overshadowed by the January lockdown! Nevertheless, it has happened and we are all enjoying the facilities and opportunities the more compact design gives us. Work continues on the grounds, with the expectation that our building contractors, Wates, will be gone by the time the new term starts in September. We are then planning a series of projects that were not included in the DfE specification. We will be making good all the

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tarmacking around the site and ensuring signage of a new one-way system is clear and maximises site safety. We have ambitious plans for the new 'quad' area, so that it becomes a pleasant outside dining area. Finally, we are hoping to complete refurbishment of the existing PE and drama blocks.

We do have a Grand Opening in mind, but need to balance the timings of this with Covid restrictions and ongoing works. I will keep everyone posted on this.

Lockdown in January affected everyone badly, even while we all understood the need for it. Many of our students felt dispirited and the effort to remotivate themselves for distance learning was much harder than the first time around. Nevertheless, attendance to lessons was in fact much better, partly because Microsoft had made considerable improvements, partly because we were able to help more families with laptops and Internet access, but mostly because students could see that this was a part of reality. A huge amount of very good work was achieved, and once again, thank you to parents who became teachers as well as babysitters and housekeepers during such a challenging time.

The return to school since Easter has seen a gradual return to normality. Subjects are now taught in specialist rooms, assemblies are once again held in the hall, providing that vital missing link with year groups as a whole. The return of formal assessments was seen during the Year 10 exams. More practical subjects - music, drama, technology, art and textiles, science, and of course HSN have resumed their rightful place in extra-curricular activities, although there is still some way to go. The late spike in Covid cases, which resulted in the last two days being held remotely, also meant that we were unable to hold sports days and awards assemblies. These have been postponed, and we have plans for them to be held as soon as possible in the autumn term.

Providing teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) was an enormous focus over the first half of summer term, and I will admit that it was a drain on time and mental resilience. However, we feel that we have acted with integrity and that students have been awarded the grades they deserve. There have been benefits and drawbacks to the entire process, and we are still not sure what the future holds.

Year 7-10 reports

These were uploaded to the Parent Portal before the end of term. If you have still not been able to access these please email the school.

Holiday expectations

Despite all the interruptions to this year, it is important that children rest when the holidays come. I really do not want students or parents to feel that they need to be cramming in lost learning time. Year 10 students have been set work to complete (using the Satchel One or SMHW learning platform). We always encourage students to keep reading (see the [website](#) for ideas), but it is equally important for children to see their friends, be physically active and enjoy down time.

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Keeping safe during the holidays, whether that is physically, emotionally or online, is a priority. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns about your child's safety. Please also see the safeguarding section of the school website, of which the following links are a selection:

- Worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you online? <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- Advice on children's mental health to staying safe online, support for parents and what to do if you're worried about a child: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>
- A safe place for support when feeling distressed and worried: <https://www.cyphaven.net/>

School contact

The school is open during the holidays, but with limited reception staffing. Please do check reception availability by ringing 01784 457275 or emailing info@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk. I am always happy to receive emails (mgould@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk) and we will endeavour to keep texts, social media posts and website announcements frequent.

Covid testing

We have been asked to deliver two on-site LFD or similar tests as students return for the autumn term. They need to have returned a negative test before returning to school. We are planning to use the Sports Centre once again as our testing centre and students will be invited in on Wednesday, 1st September for their first test. Students do not need to wear uniform and will not be in the main building either before or after their test time. Parents who have already given permission for testing to be carried out do not need to do so again. A form for new parents or those wishing to change levels of permission will be sent out along with full details of the test process. I encourage parents to maintain LFD home testing throughout the summer.

Year 11 results

Results day this year is on Thursday, 12th August. Students are invited to collect them between 10am and 12 midday. Full details of the results process are on the [website](#).

Summer school

We are running a summer school for students joining us in year 7 from 16th - 20th August. If there are spaces available, we will contact families of students moving into year 8 nearer the time. The main point of contact for this will be Mr Scott (lscott@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk) so please do contact him with any enquiries!

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Website and social media

We have recently completed a series of visits by our professional photographers, and you can see the results on the school website and on social media posts. Mrs Scott, our Head of Art & Textiles, does a tremendous job of keeping the website and social media up to date, informative and attractive, although any errors or omissions in content are solely down to me. Please do keep browsing through it. We will of course alert you to all important updates and additions, such as:

- Full parent guide 2021-2022
- School video

September arrangements

Return to school

Wednesday 1 st September	Students on site for Covid testing only
Thursday 2 nd September	Full staff inset day
Friday 3 rd September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Year 7 students return for 09.00▪ Second staff inset day
Monday 6 th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All students return for 08.40▪ Second Covid test (students remain in school)

Uniform and accessories

We are extremely proud of the way the majority of students present themselves, but a timely reminder is always a good idea! Full uniform must be (correctly) worn at all times during the school term (all items can be purchased from [School Uniform Direct](#)). As always, children who are wear incorrect uniform or who choose to wear it incorrectly will be sanctioned and may be sent home to change.

- School blazer
- White shirt with buttons to the collar (long or short sleeved)
- School skirt, tailored black trousers or tailored black shorts
- School tie
- Plain black ankle or knee-high socks, or plain black tights
- Black leather shoes
- School jumper (optional)
- An outdoor coat as necessary. This must not be a hoodie.

PE kit (to be worn to school on PE days):

- A school PE shirt (new design if purchasing)

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- School PE shorts (new design if purchasing)
- School PE socks only (new design if purchasing)
- School PE top (optional - new design only)
- School leggings (optional - new design only)
- School PE bottoms (optional - new design only)
- Trainers

Hair

- Must be a 'natural' colour
- No extreme hairstyles (if in doubt, please ask first!)
- Students must bring bands to tie long hair back in certain lessons
- Plain hair accessories only (ties, bands, clips)

Nails

- Unpainted, natural nails only

Jewellery

- A maximum of one simple stud per ear. Clear flat plastic studs may be used to maintain extra piercings
- No other jewellery

Mobile phones

- A gate-to-gate rule applies. This means that mobile phones should be switched off (or kept on silent) before they come into school and only switched on again once they have left site
- A mobile phone which is seen or heard, or which we have evidence of having been used, will be confiscated as per our policy

Confiscations

Any items confiscated will be locked in the school safe and kept for 5 days (including overnight and the weekend if necessary).

One-way system

We will keep the one-way system to keep corridors safe and to ease movement around the school.

Toilets

These will remain unisex (although allocated on the doors) but allocated to key stages rather than year groups. This means that on both lower and middle floors there will be separate toilets for:

- Years 7 & 8
- Years 9, 10 & 11

School day

We have been on a reduced school day for much of this year to accommodate bubbles. We have reviewed this to keep the best of the current system while ensuring appropriate time is given to the curriculum. We

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are moving to 6 x 50-minute periods from September. Some will remain as double periods, but not as many as this year.

08.40 - 09.00	Tutor/assembly
09.00 - 09.50	Period 1
09.50 - 10.40	Period 2
10.40 - 10.55	Break (this may be extended to 11.00 if necessary)
10.55 - 11.45	Period 3
11.45 - 12.35	Period 4
12.35 - 13.25	Lunch
13.25 - 14.15	Period 5
14.15 - 13.05	Period 6

Food

- We will once again be offering students the chance to purchase food at morning break. The offer will include sandwiches and rolls, cakes, biscuits, hot snacks and drinks. If 15 minutes does not prove to be long enough, we will extend the rest of the timings above by 5 minutes.
- The provision at lunch will remain unchanged, although the layout of the Café will change to accommodate all 5 year groups at once.

School Development Plan and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The school's strategic goal remains unchanged - to create a safe, happy and successful environment for all, and each year during the summer holidays I publish an updated development plan which shows how we plan to achieve this. Although the concepts of EDI work in absolute harmony with our goal, this year the theme of EDI will be explicit in all that we do, and students, parents, governors and staff will be invited to take a more active role in shaping our response to the challenges of our own policy. I am very excited about this, knowing I have the full support of the Bourne Education Trust, and look forward to shaping the school with your support.

Staff leavers and starters

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to the following members of staff who have played a vital role in the success of the school. We wish them all the very best for the future:

- Evelyn Lopez (Teaching Assistant)
- David Archbold (Teacher of Humanities and Science)

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- Sharon Morgan (Teaching Assistant)
- Aisleen Sheehan, who has been on secondment to the leadership team this term, returns to Epsom and Ewell High School
- Nick Elliott continues his secondment to the North-East Surrey Short Stay School in a new role as Acting Head of School

We are delighted to welcome the following new staff to school, reflecting the increase in student numbers:

- Will Schofield (Teacher of Humanities, completed training with us)
- Joseph Burgham (Teacher of Business, completed training with us)
- Freya Hall (Teacher of Science, completed training with us)
- Habeebah Khan (Teacher of English, completed training with us)
- Craig Wilson (Teacher of Science)
- Gloria Odogu (Teacher of Science)
- Isabella Hodge (Teaching Assistant)
- Isa Abreu (Teaching Assistant)

Congratulations go to the following for securing new or additional roles within the school:

- Jade Grills and Rob Lawrence (Acting Deputy Headteachers)
- Olivia Brauten-Smith (Assistant Headteacher)
- Mark Foley (Head of Maths)
- Marissa Collova (Head of Science)
- Joseph Moore (Gifted & Talented and Extended Curriculum)
- Emma Vickery (Head of Year 7)
- Sophie Blackburn (Teacher of Science, hitherto Teaching Assistant)
- Lauren Hall (SENDCo Designate)
- Emma Fuller (Intervention Co-ordinator)
- Alice Heywood (Wellbeing Co-ordinator)
- Kieran Howes (Duke of Edinburgh)