

December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Reaching the end of our first term of the academic year, we find ourselves inevitably reflecting on the successes and challenges we've had as a school community. Despite the obvious spectre of pandemic that we are ever mindful of, the term has been broadly, perhaps even surprisingly, normal.

As is often the case, this has been down to the positive and determined attitudes of staff, students and families. We have supported each other with spirit and humour and ensured that everything we do and every decision we take remains focused on our students. Where necessary we have made decisions to adapt our plans, review contingencies and adjust our approaches. Students have flexed with these without complaint.

We have had our first round of examinations and were pleased to see so many students finding their outcomes reflected their hard work. Of course, there is always more to do, new heights to climb and new challenges ahead; but this term has given us a solid bedrock to build upon.

The new year sees some changes to our pastoral structures as we welcome Mr Bland to our team. He joins us from Woking High and will be sharing his passions, experience working in the television industry and expertise as a Media and ICT teacher as well as the Pastoral lead for Years 9 and 10. I am certain that students and families will enjoy working with him and we welcome him into the Kings community.

His arrival means that Miss Hamilton will change roles slightly to lead Years 7 and 8, as well as our summer transition from primary school which was so successful last year.

Mr Stewart's remit will grow a little to include pastoral support, as well as academic support, for Year 11 students. We are excited by the new structure.

We continue to ask that families contact their child's tutor in the first instance around any information you need to communicate or issues you wish to raise.

Christmas concert

On Wednesday lunchtime students from the Performing Arts Department at Kings College took to the stage to perform a slimmed-down version of what they had been working on this term. The theatre group brought to life Dickens' A Christmas Carol, the dancers rocked to Jingle Bell Rock and the choir gave a rabble-rousing version of I'm Just a Kid (and life is a nightmare!). Students were cheered on by their peers and teachers alike and the Christmas Spirit was well and truly alive. Thank you to all the members of staff who helped bring this performance to life.



Music lessons

We are pleased to have been able to secure some tremendous peripatetic music teachers to provide private lessons within school time at subsidised prices. They are £15 for a 30 minute 1:1 lesson or £7.50 for a 30 minute shared lesson. Please ask Miss Wallis or Miss Imison for a form.



Finding Our Futures

Thinking about our aspirations and futures is a priority for Kings College and this term we've welcomed several visits to school from the University of Surrey. Earlier in the module, Year 7s learnt about what university is and had a chance to design their own university campuses. Then in December, students got to take on the role of a careers advisor in a Christmas Careers workshop where they looked at the nutritional content of festive snacks, tried to save Santa from a breaking and entering charge as his defence lawyer and became business entrepreneurs designing a new decoration. Year 9s learnt about the importance of mindfulness, wellbeing and resilience in their university workshop and had a go at making positivity jars. Year 10 and 11s looked ahead to their Next Steps and developed their interview and networking skills in preparation for college applications.

Some of our Year 9 students also had the opportunity to visit the University campus in December for a Spoken Word workshop where they learnt about discrimination in society and then wrote and performed their very own poetry pieces, specifically to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. We are very proud of what they achieved in such a short space of time and it was great to see such confidence when performing their pieces.

Attendance

Attendance for most students has been very good, and is perhaps more important than ever. We have been very pleased with our attendance despite the wider challenges. More than a third of the school have had 100% attendance.

Where we have had to send students home with any symptoms, they receive a letter informing them of the next steps they must take and how to access our remote learning provision. I am hopeful that the clarity within is helpful at a time where people may feel stressed.

As ever, I must remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority, they will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Currently the amount payable under a penalty notice is £60.00 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. Thereafter the amount increases to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.



Student Council Community Group Collection

This half term the Community Groups focus has been to support the school community to collect food items for the local foodbanks in the run up to Christmas. They would like to thank everyone that was able to donate every day and luxury items to support our local community. The foodbank staff were really overwhelmed with the generosity of our community.

Student Council Wellbeing Group

On the run up to Christmas the Wellbeing Group have challenged each tutor group to get their form rooms decorated ready for Christmas. This has seen many Christmas Trees, paper chains and snowflakes carefully created ready for judging and prize giving. It has been a great way for students to come together and work as form groups. Well done to the winning form groups in each year.

Student Council Eco Group

The Eco Team have been very busy this term. Firstly, they have met with RHS Wisley second year Garden Design students who are designing a wellbeing garden for the school. This will see a second space developed at Kings College for gardening and student access at breaks and lunches. The Wisley students have used the pupils' ideas and will now produce designs that we be judged



by the Eco Group next spring and then be built in the summer term. Further to this the Eco Group have helped get the gardening group back up and running on Thursday lunchtimes, already they have been caring for the school quad garden and planting new fruit trees that have been donated to the school by the National Tree Council. Whilst the trees are very small at present the Eco Team are taking responsibility to nurture these trees for future pupils to enjoy. Finally, the team helped to complete the Community Garden at the Hive which is situated next to Kings College. We are very proud of all the students that got involved and supported the design work and then volunteered their time to complete the garden which will benefit the many groups that use the space.

Diversity Group

This term saw the completion of the Diversity Display by the team. The group surveyed all students at Kings in the summer term to understand the diversity of languages and places that our community have lived across the world in order to create a display to celebrate this. The display is now up in the main corridor for everyone to see. We are proud to know that as a community there are 37 languages spoken by our community.



Administration and visits to school

If you need to report your child as absent from school or want to inform us about an appointment, where possible please use Studybugs (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>). Parents have reported that it is an easy system to use and has been useful as a means of communication. Like all schools, we share the anonymised information received to help the NHS understand local issues with bugs and illness, as well as where there are COVID-like symptoms.

Where possible, please arrange any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, please remember to advise us in advance, and provide evidence of any appointments.

If you have a general query, please continue to email office@kingscollegeguildford.com as your main point of contact with the school. Due to the latest government guidelines we would like to discourage visitors unless arrangements have been made in advance.

When returning forms or if you wish to drop off a letter, please use the letterbox which is situated in the wall outside Reception.

We are unable to take in any forgotten items unless they are of a medical nature. Please encourage your child to double check their bag before leaving in the morning. We have seen this greatly improved over this term.

Please ensure your child's items are clearly labelled with their names, so misplaced items can then be returned back to the rightful owner. We have a number of water bottles and items of PE Kit in lost property. If you are missing anything, please get your child to visit Mandy in the cloakroom.

Please be aware that we no longer accept cash payments on-site. All payments should be via Parent Pay or by card/contactless payment, including any uniform items.

Reminders about uniform, energy drinks and chewing gum

A quick reminder that we continue to have high expectations of and for our students. This is reflected in ensuring students are correctly attired for school. As a result, I would ask that you ensure that your child abides by uniform policy, especially around piercings, hair colour, make up and false/coloured nails. Whilst we recognise the right of everyone to individual expressions of personality, it is also important that rules are respected so student focus is on learning rather than aesthetics.

Students should only be bringing water or small boxes of fruit juice into school. We do not allow externally purchased fizzy drinks or 'energy' drinks in school. Any found will continue to be confiscated and disposed of. Similarly, chewing gum is not permitted anywhere on site. This is to avoid any getting stuck in the new carpet which has been laid throughout the main school building and Performing Arts block.

Final thoughts and our return in January

Students return to lessons in school on Wednesday 5th January 2022. As per government guidance, we have been asked to do a single lateral flow test with all students on site (subject to parental permissions) before their return to school. The school has an INSET day for staff training on Tuesday 4th January and we would like to try and complete these tests on that day so learning time is not compromised. We will be doing the tests at the times below. They will only need to be on site for the test, which should take a few minutes, and do not need and do not need to wear uniform. They will then be free to go home. If the result is positive we will call to inform you of this. All testing will be processed in school and the results sent to NHS Track and Trace.

Year 10: 11.00 - 11.30

Year 11: 11.30 - 12.00

Year 9: 1.00 - 1.45

Year 8: 1.45 - 2.30

Year 7: 2.30 - 3.15

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas from all of the team at Kings.

Best wishes,



Alastair McKenzie
Principal