



14th December 2021

End of Autumn Term Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are now just a few days away from the end of a packed, eventful and overwhelmingly positive Autumn Term. Schools are always busy places, but the pace always seems to accelerate exponentially in the final week before Christmas!

The exam desks have now been packed away following the successful completion of our Year 11 and Year 13 mock exams. Well done to all students who have sat exams, and I hope your grades reflect the hard work you put-in to revising for your various subjects.

The desks in the hall were rapidly replaced with rows of seats to accommodate the audience for our school production of *Chicago*. If you were lucky enough to have been able to attend, you will know it was a fabulous production. Congratulations to the entire cast and also to Ms Burrough for directing another stunning production! Thanks must also go to Miss Scorrer, Mr Talbot and Mrs Jex for their invaluable contributions to a highly professional and engaging performance.

As is the case for everything that happens in school at the moment, we have to operate against the back-drop of the pandemic. I should like to pass on my thanks to all families for the positive way in which you have supported our twice-weekly LFD testing and our face-covering protocols. If you would like to obtain further LFD tests for the holiday period, these are available outside of lesson time from the School Office. Please try to continue the routine of LFD testing over the Christmas period.

In line with my recent e-mail (13th December), I would like to remind parents that we shall continue to expect face coverings to be worn in communal indoor areas and in lessons up to the end of the first week back after Christmas. We shall then re-consider the position based on COVID rates in school and the wider community at that time.

Return to School in January 2022

The Government expects all secondary schools to re-establish a COVID Test Centre to test all pupils once when they return to school after the Christmas holiday. This will require a staggered return of pupils at the beginning of term:

Return Date	Year Groups
Tuesday 4 th January	Years 11, 12 and 13
Wednesday 5 th January	Years 9 and 10
Thursday 6 th January	Years 7 and 8

As our Catering Team will all be involved in COVID Testing, school meals and break-time snacks will not be available in school until **Friday 7th January**. Pupils in receipt of free school meals will be able to collect a meal from the Dining Room at the start of each lunch break on 4th, 5th and 6th January.



Year 9 Parents' Evening

Our Year 9 Parents' Evening has been re-scheduled for **Thursday 6th January**. Apologies for the necessity of re-scheduling this important event, but on the date originally planned more than a quarter of our teaching staff were unavoidably absent from school.

Summer Examinations

For our students in examination year groups (Year 11 and Year 13, but also pupils in Year 10 studying GCSE RE) we are ensuring that we have covered all of the required areas of each course during lesson time. However, for this year only, the examination boards will be publishing advance information on the content of some GCSE and A Level exams by **Monday 7th February 2022**. The full letter to schools from OFQUAL can be read [here](#).

As the letter explains, this unusual step will 'support students and teachers in focusing revision for exams' and 'is intended to make sure that we are being as fair as possible to students given the disruption they have experienced, and many continue to face, due to the coronavirus pandemic.'

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Grantham Rotary Club

It was a pleasure to welcome members of Grantham Rotary Club into school last week and to receive a cheque from them for £2,500 which will help to support the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in school. Sir William Robertson Academy has always been a strong supporter of the Rotary Club's annual Swimathon event which raises a huge amount of money for a range of community activities, and we are looking forward to taking part once again in February 2022 – you should have received a letter home about this during the past week. Thank you in advance for your support with this great local tradition.

3G Football Pitch

As recent visitors to the school will be aware, our 3G football pitch is now very close to opening for use, both within school and as a community resource to support local grass-roots football. An exciting opening ceremony involving our pupils and partner football clubs is being planned for the new year.

Three-year Key Stage 3

In common with many schools up-and-down the country we have been reviewing how we structure learning for our pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. For the last few years we have adopted a three-year approach to our GCSE courses across years 9, 10 and 11. While this continues to work well for our pupils and delivers excellent outcomes, it does mean that pupils only study some subjects for two years at Key Stage 3 rather than the three years as outlined in the National Curriculum.

We are also mindful that the last two years have been characterised by significant interruptions to all pupils' learning – our current Year 7 pupils will have experienced school closures in both Year 5 and Year 6. Our Year 8 pupils all experienced periods of school closure during Year 6 and Year 7. With this in mind, we feel that the time is right for us to revert to a three-year Key Stage 3 and a two-year Key Stage 4. This will allow us to retain the breadth of our curriculum during Year 9 and to ensure that pupils have fully mastered the Key Stage 3 curriculum before moving on to GCSE courses in Year 10.

As a consequence there will be no options process in February 2022 for our current Year 8 pupils. This will become a Year 9 options process, with subject choices for GCSE being made in February 2023.

Vacancy at Bassingham Primary School

I was wondering whether a vacancy at Bassingham Primary School (our partner school within Aspire Schools Trust) might be of interest to anyone in your family or wider circle of friends? The post is a Senior Administrator position, based in their school office. The role is for 37 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year (term-time + 2 weeks). The precise start date will be agreed with the successful applicant. Full details below:

[Vacancies | Bassingham Primary School \(bassingham.school.org\)](http://bassingham.school.org)

On behalf of the whole school community I would like to wish all families a peaceful, safe and healthy Christmas and New Year. I hope none of you are too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve and I hope you all get to enjoy the festive season with people you care about. Our world is going to continue to be full of challenges in the year to come, but as my favourite American poet and activist Maya Angelou says, 'I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.'

We look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back in January, happy, healthy and ready to learn.

Best wishes from us all and thank you for all of the kind and supportive messages we have received from you this term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.A. Guest', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

M.A. Guest
Headteacher