
19th August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with regret that I am writing to let you know that we need to change the arrangements for the start of The Swan's autumn term. **Term will start on 7th September**, as planned, however students will not be required on-site full time until the following week - **Monday 14th September for year 7 and Tuesday 15th September for year 8**. Each year 7 tutor group will be expected to attend school for one day during the week of 7th September for mini-matriculation activities but these will take place on the Cherwell site - more details below.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the Covid-19 lockdown has created significant challenges for the construction industry in terms of availability of labour and resources. Our developers have worked extremely hard in difficult circumstances to get the internal parts of the school ready for the start of term. However, although the building itself is ready, the external areas of the site (including the access route for staff and students) do not yet meet the high standard required for us to be able to move in and will not be ready by the 7th September. The safety of our students is our first priority and we are not prepared to compromise on this. **Please be assured that we are confident that the new site will be fully ready for the 14th September and we look forward to welcoming all of our students to our brand new facilities then.**

I appreciate that this change is likely to cause inconvenience to students and families who are excited to return for the new academic year and, on behalf of everyone involved in the project, I can only apologise for this. I hope that you will agree that the relatively short delay to the start of the year is preferable to the alternative contingency option, which is to remain at our temporary site with limited facilities until October half term. We are keen to get all of our students back to full time education in September and are confident that the plans we have put in place are the best way to achieve this.

The Swan School already has a longer teaching day than other schools so we are confident that the changes to the start of term will not impact the educational outcomes of our students. We will also be putting in place the following measures to ensure that students' learning is not compromised:

- **Providing pre-learning tasks for all students to be completed during the week of the 7th September.** Completing these activities will help students to get off to a flying start when they return to school.
- **Inviting all year 7 students into school for a day during the week of the 7th September for mini-matriculation.** This will help students get to know their new classmates and introduce them to our school routines and expectations. Mini-matriculation will be held off-site at Cherwell School (more details will follow - year 7 families will be contacted separately).
- **Shortening matriculation week for both year 7 and year 8 students.** Matriculation is a vital part of our school year; it helps us to build the strong foundations that allow our students to be so successful and is particularly

important this year in light of how much time most students have spent away from school. We expect that curriculum lessons will start on Wednesday 16th September (as opposed to Monday 14th as previously planned) resulting in only two days' reduction in curriculum learning time.

- **Staff will use the additional time before students arrive back full time to complete final preparations for the new term.** This time will be particularly valuable in terms of settling into the new building and embedding new Covid-related routines.

We understand that this change may create difficulties for some families and recognise the important role that we play in supporting the whole of our community. We will therefore be offering limited 'essential provision' for families who are unable to arrange alternative care for their children from Monday 7th to Thursday 10th September (Friday 10th will be used for staff training). If you would like to request this provision, [please complete this form](#) by **Thursday 27th August**. Please note that spaces in the 'essential provision' are limited; parents/carers should make alternative childcare arrangements where at all possible. It is possible that not all requests will be able to be honoured.

We will write to year 7 parents separately to confirm arrangements for mini-matriculation during the week of the 7th September. In the meantime, please take the time to read the FAQs document attached and do get in touch if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Kay Wood (Headteacher)