

PARENT BULLETIN - Friday 18th September 2020



Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of our first 'proper' week back at school in our new site and I want to start by saying how wonderful it has been to see all of our students again. Our year 7 Cygnets have made a brilliant start to their secondary school experience and we have been so impressed by the leadership example that our year 8s have set. Our staff try to learn the name of every student over the summer holiday and this has really helped to build our sense of community.

As we settle into our new building, I do want to make you aware that we are still having issues with our internet. For reasons that I won't bore you with, we do not yet have a broadband connection so we are relying on a 4G solution to run an entire school. This is clearly very challenging. We have prioritised making sure that all classrooms are fully connected so that children can be taught without disruption, however the slow connection is presenting issues for staff working elsewhere in the school, particularly our admin team. We are doing everything we can to resolve this issue but I ask for your patience as we may not be as quick to respond to messages or as easily able to help you with problems with ParentMail and MCAS.

Ms Wood

Covid 19

Communicating about cases

Please read this [letter](#), which outlines the actions we will take as a school in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of Covid1-19. I understand that this is a worrying time for parents, but please be assured that we will communicate with you in a timely way any information that you need to know.

What you can do as parents

To help keep our community safe, we ask you to:

- Speak to your child about the importance of maintaining good hygiene and social distancing measures.
- Keep your child home from school if they display any of the [symptoms of Covid-19](#). Please keep us informed if your child or a member of your household becomes ill.
- Ensure your child has a bottle of hand sanitiser with them if at all possible. Face masks are not mandatory, but your child is welcome to wear one in school if they would prefer to.
- Ensure your child has their own water bottle - these can be filled up from water fountains.

This [information](#) from our school nurse from our school nurse may also be helpful for parents trying to navigate this difficult time.

Collecting children from school

Parents are politely reminded that they must not gather at our school gate to collect their children at the end of the day. This is to help us reduce the risk of transmission between people in different households, as well as reducing congestion on the cycle path. If you would like to collect your child, you must arrange for them to meet you a distance away from the school gate.

Getting to school

We encourage as many students as possible to travel to school by walking, cycling, or taking the bus. There is support for how to do this on [our website](#). If there are mobility reasons why your child needs to be dropped off, please make sure that you have applied for a permit, which must be displayed in your windscreen. Entry times are restricted for all vehicles.

- **Vehicles without a permit are not permitted to access the school site;**
- **Parents must not drop off their children on local residential streets or in the slip road entry to the school premises. If you must drive, we recommend parking at Ferry Leisure Centre or OXSRAD car parks and asking your child to walk the rest of the way.**

ParentMail and MyChildAtSchool

We are aware that some parents are having issues logging onto our parents portals. Please be aware that we are working hard to resolve these issues and will let you know when we have found a solution. Be assured that your child will still be fed lunch but we would ask you to get them to bring their own snack (fruit or veg; no nuts) to eat at break.

Enrichment

Library News

I am delighted to announce that our new Library has now opened for borrowing, browsing and reading, and students have already been enjoying the many new books that we have added to the collection. We have various safety measures in place, such as sanitizing hands, limiting numbers and quarantining returned books. A quick word to introduce myself: having trained and worked as an English teacher, I then completed a PhD and have taught literature at Oxford University for the last 12 years. I've published a few books myself, including on the African American authors Toni Morrison and Ralph Ellison, and have continued to work with young people through running creative writing clubs in local schools. It's a great privilege to be the Swan School's first Librarian, and I cannot wait to talk about books with each and every student over the coming weeks. One small request: we are still missing a few books that were borrowed last year, so if you see any in your home, could they please be dropped off at Reception or in the Library as soon as possible. Thanks so much for your help with that. Books of the Week (beginning 21st September) are: *Becoming*, by Michelle Obama - an uplifting read for (nearly) all ages; and *The Arrival*, by Shaun Tan - a beautiful and detailed wordless text about how it feels to be new and to learn to thrive in an unfamiliar place.

Tessa Roynon, School Librarian.

Instrumental Lessons

As the new year begins, I would like to remind parents that we have several instrumental teachers in school that offer private lessons. We have a teacher for the following instruments: piano, drums, guitar, violin and brass. If you are interested in your child receiving instrumental lessons, please get in contact with me (katrina.playford@theswanschool.org.uk) and I will put you in contact with the relevant teacher.

Mrs Playford, Head of Performance

Speech & Drama at The Swan School

As well as private instrumental lessons, we also have a private Speech & Drama teacher at The Swan School.

Speech & Drama lessons are taught in small groups of 3-6, offering pupils a focused environment to develop acting skills to a high level and build confidence in speaking and presentation skills. Pupils learn and perform as a small ensemble, taking a Trinity drama exam at the end of the academic year, offering the best balance between individual responsibility and teamwork, encountering a broad range of dramatic literature along the way. Classes are held during the school day on a Tuesday, with pupils coming out of academic lessons for 30 minutes per week on a rotating timetable. Please note that capacity for these sessions is limited. £180 per term (10 sessions). Classes are taught by visiting theatre director Robin Colyer. Email for details and signup: robin@flintlocktheatre.com

Robin Colyer, Speech & Drama teacher

Safeguarding

Social Media Alarming Video

An alarming video circulated on social media last week of a person graphically ending his life and the emergency services responding. If your child was unfortunate enough to see this then some advice is shared below:

What to do if your child sees something upsetting online (Safer Internet Centre)

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/advice-parents-what-do-if-your-child-sees-something-upsetting-online>

Key Dates:

- Year 7 Parents Welcome Event - Tuesday 22nd September (virtual)
- Virtual Open Evening - Wednesday 7th October
- Progress check afternoon - Thursday 15th October
- Half Term - Thursday 22nd October - Friday 30th October
- Data and planning day - Friday 4th December
- Parent Day - Wednesday 9th December
- End of Term - Thursday 17th December