

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

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10 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, please forgive a rather long letter this week. There is much to share as we approach the end of term.

It was a pleasure to attend the Christmas Concert this week and to get back some of the sparkle and joy that has been missing during the period of COVID. I was so proud of all our performers for the brilliant concert – many of whom were performing for the first time ever.

Charity events

There are a number of charity events taking place in the run up to Christmas which are an opportunity for us to show love and service to our community and causes close to our hearts. Thank you to all our families for your support and to staff for organising these.

- The sixth form have been raising money for sleeping bags for Shelter.
- Year 7 have been taking part in a 'reverse advent calendar'.
- The Elf / Reindeer run is taking place after school on Tuesday 14 December with various prizes and hot chocolate / mince pies to be had. Money raised will go to St John's Hospice.
- We are having a Christmas jumper / festive accessories day on Wednesday 15 December to raise money for Save the Children and Papyrus. Pupils are asked to bring in a £1 donation. Normal school uniform rules apply but blazer is optional if wearing a Christmas jumper.

Thank you also to everyone who has contributed to our Christmas top up collection, with many packed boxes of items going to The Olive Branch today. We are keen to support the growing demand faced by our local foodbank charity, so intend to promote this further in school next year, with more regular giving opportunities for those who are able and would like to.

Christmas Lunch

Christmas lunches will be served next week on Tuesday for main school and Wednesday for Sixth Form.

Carol Service

We are looking forward to this Ripley highlight next week on Tuesday at 7pm. Please see the email from Mr Gillthorpe giving further details.

End of Term Arrangements: Friday 17 December

We are delighted that all pupils, students and staff will be able to mark the end of term with a Christmas communion service at one of our wonderful local churches.

Pupils and staff will be required to wear masks, unless exempt. We will review our COVID-19 risk assessments prior to the day of the services.

Year 7 and year 8 pupils should make their own way to Lancaster Priory for 8.40am, where they will be registered by their Progress Tutor at 8.45am. To help direct pupils to the Priory entrance, staff and sixth form students, wearing high visibility jackets, will be located at Lancaster Bus Station, Common Garden Street, the Judges Lodgings and on Castle Hill. Please take time to show or explain to your child the best route for them to take when making their way to the Priory.

Believe.....

Year 9 pupils should arrive at Ripley, in their form rooms, by 8.45am. They will be registered before walking to Christ Church, Lancaster, for their service. Pupils will walk in tutor groups accompanied by their Progress Tutors. Ripley staff will be positioned on road crossing points on the planned route.

Year 10 pupils should arrive at Ripley, in their form rooms, by 8.45am. They will be registered before walking to St Paul's, Scotforth, for their service. Pupils will walk in tutor groups accompanied by their Progress Tutors. Ripley staff will be positioned on road crossing points on the planned route.

Year 11 pupils should arrive at Ripley, in their form rooms, by 8.45am. They will be registered before walking to St Thomas's, Lancaster, for their service. Pupils will walk in tutor groups accompanied by their Progress Tutors. Ripley staff will be positioned on road crossing points on the planned route.

Year 12 and Year 13 students will attend their service in the Ripley Chapel. Students should register in their registration groups at 8.45am before congregating in the Chapel.

Unfortunately, we are not able to welcome any parents, carers or friends of Ripley to join us at any of our services this year.

End of Term Bus Arrangements

The school day will finish at 12.25pm. The following buses will be available from school at 12.25pm:

935, 500, 501, 502, 503, 567, 581, 487

Pupils to go to the **bus station** for the **55** and **81** services

Pupils to go to the **bus station** for the **582** (13.45hrs service)

Pupils to go to **Scotforth Road** for the services to **Garstang, Catterall & Blackpool**

Safeguarding Update

Throughout the Autumn Term, pupils have been receiving regular input regarding safeguarding. Mrs Benter, our DSL, has led age-appropriate assemblies with each year group that have identified the four main types of child abuse: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Work in tutor time, in curriculum lessons and on PSHE days has added to this by addressing different issues and scenarios that a young person may face. Educating our young people on having the confidence to tell someone if they think that they, or someone they know, are victims of abuse is to be encouraged. Abuse may be at the hands of an adult or another child. Abuse may take place in person or online. Abuse is never the child's fault and we take seriously our role to protect all of our young people.

We are seeing more and more occasions when peer on peer abuse is taking place online, often through social media platforms that are difficult to trace. Over the Christmas holidays, we ask that you continue to be vigilant with your child's conduct on their phones. Most social media apps have minimum age guidelines, and this is for a reason – to protect our children. Even just 'liking' a post that is discriminatory or abusive in nature towards another can be hurtful and cause trauma to the victim.

Anxiety, panic attacks, being uncharacteristically quiet, withdrawing from their normal social activities and wanting to spend more time alone are just some of the signs to indicate that something might be wrong. Encourage your child to talk to you, or someone they trust, and reassure them that they are not alone. We are working hard to encourage our pupils to be kind and we thank you for supporting this message.

Vaping

We have been made aware, by our links with the community policing team, that vaping and using e-cigarettes is becoming increasingly common in young people. Often vaping devices can appear to look like everyday objects, such as lip gloss tubes, USB devices and pens and the vape aroma can be

bought in a variety of sweet-smelling scents. Through assemblies, we have made pupils aware of the potential adverse health conditions that are linked to vaping. Please be vigilant at home during the holiday period.

Cadets – volunteers needed

We are looking for parental volunteers to join our CCF team. The cadets group is something we are very proud of here at Ripley. We are asking for volunteers to help as the cadet group is becoming increasingly popular and we would love to continue to grow.

If you would be interested in helping with the cadets on their parade nights (Tuesday after school) and on visits, please do get in touch with Mr Hale via Parentline. Any time or support you can give would be welcome. No military knowledge or experience is necessary! We will need to ensure all volunteers are DBS checked, but we will take care of this for you.

COVID

We have been asked to share the advice below regarding COVID vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccine update on second doses for 12 to 15 year olds and booster doses for adults

Following the emergence of the Omicron variant, including confirmed cases in the UK, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has urgently reviewed vaccine response measures.

JCVI now advises that:

- all adults aged 18 to 39 years should be offered a booster dose, in order of descending age groups - to be given no sooner than three months after the primary course
- all severely immunosuppressed individuals should be offered their booster dose no sooner than three months after completing their primary course of 3 doses
- young people aged 12 to 15 years should receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than twelve weeks after the first dose.

These measures aim to accelerate the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and raise levels of protection across the population, and have been accepted by the government. Vaccinating young people should help to reduce the need for young people to have time off school and should reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools.

Further information on how 12 to 15 year olds will be able to access a second dose of the vaccine, and how adults below the age of 40 will be able to access a booster vaccination, will be provided shortly.

JCVI previously advised that those aged over 40 years and those at higher risk from COVID-19 should be offered a booster. Those eligible can book their appointment on the NHS website.

COVID testing

The government have asked families and school staff to continue to take a lateral flow test twice weekly over the Christmas period. Test kits are available from school and can be collected from the main office or the medical room.

January Return and COVID testing

We have been asked to test pupils again on their return to school in January. Please refer to Mr Gomersall's email this week which gives details of this and also a staggered start that we have had to implement in order to facilitate this. Work will be provided via the Blended Learning pages on Firefly for pupils who have a slightly later start. Please note, however, that a test taken within 90 days of

having had COVID has a small risk of producing a false positive and it may be better for those pupils not to engage in the January testing.

Firefly

Firefly is being upgraded from Tuesday 21 December at 08:00 and will be finished by 18:00 on Wednesday 22 December.

Parents and pupils can see the working status of Firefly by going to <https://fireflylearning.status.io>

Worship

In times of Chapel and Form Worship in recent weeks, we have covered a range of topical themes, including the Power of Words and Kindness (Anti-Bullying Week), Climate Justice (COP26), and Advent. We aim to make all worship content engaging, relevant and applicable to life, with space for reflection. This week Michael, our Chaplain, is sharing about the heart of Christmas and we look forward to celebrating further at the end of term services.

I would like to thank you all for your support this term and to wish you all a happy and holy Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Walmsley', written in a cursive style.

Mrs C Walmsley
Principal