



4 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

General update – Year 9 options deadline, Examinations 2021, Free School Meals, Safety advice, SEND clinics, Health and wellbeing challenge

I hope my weekly letter finds you well as February has crept up on us. I promise that my letter will be shorter this week and, for the first time in many months, I do not have a single Covid update to share with you. Small victories.....

Year 9 options deadline

The application form remains available through the FROG microsite along with copies of all other information. The deadline for a completed application is this Friday, 5 February 2021.

Mr Ward and Mr Kirk held their live Q&A last night via MS Teams for any parents with remaining queries.

If you still have any unanswered questions, please direct these through to options@srpa.co.uk where the options team will pick it up and be able to deal with your enquiry.

Examinations 2021

The consultation is now closed and there have been around 90,000 responses, many from students, which is really pleasing. I expect publication of the final response during the week beginning 22 February and will write to you with my take on this and what it means for our youngsters at that time.

Free School Meals

As half term approaches, you may be aware that the government have decided that schools do not need to supply FSM vouchers for the half term week because this is being picked up by local authorities.

Regardless, we will be supplying vouchers in the usual way in order that no inconvenience is caused to parents and carers.

Safety advice

It is Children's Mental Health Week this week. The website below has some resources which you may find useful to explore:

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/parents-and-carers/>

Nationally over the last 12 months, there has been an increase in the number of schools reporting that students, while at home, have accessed content which is not always appropriate, some of which has been quite scary or upsetting. While there is no perfect way to eliminate this risk, we feel that there are things that parents and carers can do to support their children online, reduce the risk or manage it after the fact. Here are some of the practical steps parents and carers can follow:

- Contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP): Companies that provide broadband such as BT, Sky and Virgin, offer free protection for parents and carers. They can filter your internet connection directly, without having to install anything. Guide on how to use this can be found here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/broadband-mobile/>
- YouTube is a fantastic resource, especially when home schooling, but not all the content is appropriate for children and not all YouTube channels are made for young audiences. YouTube has an app just for children – YouTube Kids – but many people don't realise that the main YouTube app has a restricted mode. Check out more about how it works here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/youtube-app/>
- Games consoles have features that can limit what games they can play based on the age ratings and can even turn off certain features to allow gaming to be a little safer. To learn more about these features visit <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/>
- Games are also rated based on the content, not how difficult they are. 18 rated games can have very graphic violence, adult language and themes, sexual content and horror elements. Learn a bit more about appropriate games by visiting <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming-whats-appropriate-for-your-child/> or visit this site for more about game ratings <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/pegi-games-ratings-explained>



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It's important to remember that no filters or controls are 100% effective so make sure your child knows that they can, and should, talk to someone if they see or hear anything upsetting online so we can offer them some reassurance. This information from Thinkuknow might be useful <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Im-worried-my-primary-aged-child-might-see-something-inappropriate-online/>

SEND clinics

In an effort to further support our students, we are still offering weekly SEND clinic sessions if you wish to speak to the SENCO.

Mr Adlington, Executive SENCO, will be available during these bookable sessions via Microsoft Teams and will be able to meet with you to discuss any SEND related concerns you may have. Your child is more than welcome to join the session too if necessary.

The timings of the weekly SEND clinic are as follows:

Monday 9:30-10:00.

Tuesday 14:15-15:15.

The sessions will be held in 15 minute intervals so if you would like to book a 15 minute meeting with Mr Adlington during these times then please email your request to SENDCO@srpa.co.uk. We will contact you to confirm your meeting is booked.

Finally, we are also offering a student specific session for your child to book if they wish to do so. Here, they will have the chance to speak to a member of the SEND team and ask any SEND related support questions they may have. If your child would like to book one of these student specific sessions, please can they contact JBurr@srpa.co.uk and the meeting will be arranged with them.

Health and wellbeing challenge

Yesterday we launched the House health and well-being challenge as part of the PD day (please see attached).



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Students have been asked to e-mail their PE teacher any entries they have by Friday 12 February. If students wish to send in any examples of health and well-being activities they completed for PD day yesterday these can double up as competition entries.

It has been another busy week so far with our most recent PD Day and virtual work experience for Year 12. I had the distinct pleasure of presenting to Year 12 on the theme of leadership as part of their virtual two day event and really enjoyed it. It was so nice to hear a few familiar voices and I hope it proved useful! Once again, Mr Griffiths has done a really good job organising PD Day with members of his team. It has been really great to see so many examples of super work coming in on a well-being theme too.

In addition, as part of our PD day/children's mental health week we offered one to one well-being checks with one of the team and we will endeavour to follow up with those we have not managed to reach in the coming days.

A special mention to Jake S in Year 7 for his excellent PowerPoint presentation showing us the range of wellbeing activities he took part in. Absolutely superb! Keep it going Jake and continue to be a good example for others. In the words of American publisher Robert J. Collier: "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."

Take the best of care this next week.

I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Hardy
Head Teacher



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