



WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL
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Dear families,

I am writing this week with four important updates as we look towards the half term break, and the final seven weeks of the 2020-21 academic year. After the disruption of the Autumn and Spring Terms, we are now in a period of looking ahead and things returning more to normal. In [last week's newsletter](#) we laid out the ways that we expect restrictions to change going forward, including mask wearing, students working in mixed-age groups and trips and visits outside school. Here are some further important updates.

Lateral flow testing

We would like to remind families of the importance of regular Lateral Flow Testing for coronavirus, using the test kits that we distribute every three weeks. Students will have come home last Friday, 14th May, with enough kits to test twice per week through to our return to school on Tuesday 8th June. If you need to order more test kits for your family, you can do this at <http://camden.gov.uk/rapidtest> Last Friday, we had unfortunate reports from members of the public that some students had lost their test kits and that they had been thrown away when walking home. We will make sure that the next set of test kits are labelled so that students know which box is theirs and can bring them home safely. Regular testing is a vital ongoing safeguard to keep coronavirus cases in Camden low, and therefore to keep schools open to all students.

Attendance

It has been fantastic to welcome the whole school community back this half term, but there are some students who have not yet got into good routines of coming to school every day for all lessons. It is vital that they do this as much as they possibly can: each day not in school this year is so important. We set a minimum target for attendance for all students: 95%. In a normal year, this would mean a student being absent for 10 days, but this year 95% means only 7 days absent. Therefore, if a student has been absent for more than 7 days, this is likely to have a noticeable impact on their progress with learning, their literacy and their relationships with their friends.

Unless students have coronavirus symptoms/are isolating or are so unwell that they cannot physically make it to school, they should attend school every day. Students with low attendance will continue to receive phone calls from staff to discuss the reasons for absence, and if necessary, a home visit.

I have also had requests for students to take holiday in term time in the summer. While I appreciate families' desire to travel when restrictions lift, I should let you know that these absences will not be authorised.

Year 11 and 13 information

Year 11 students have a final week of GCSE assessments, and Year 13 for A Level/BTEC. It is vital that students attend school for all their assessments. Arrangements for Year 11 dismissal on Friday will be sent to families of these students in the middle of next week.

Arrangements for after half term

Uniform and PE kit

Up to now, students have been coming to school in PE kit on some days so that they do not have to change during the school day. From Tuesday 8th June, all students will need to be in normal school uniform every day, and bring their PE kit to get changed for their lessons. [Our uniform is listed on our website](#). Having a uniform is an important part of a shared identity for students at William Ellis. Blazers remain optional for the rest of this academic year, but students must not wear hoodies in lessons and will be asked to remove them now that it is the summer term.

Year 9 students who purchase a blazer or tie this half term should buy black Key Stage 4 items. They should continue to buy the full school PE kit including the blue t-shirt and plain black tracksuit bottoms.

Year 9 – change to lesson times

After half term we will continue to have separate break and lunchtimes for different year groups, to maintain good routines in school and to support social distancing. However, from 8th June Year 9 students will follow the Key Stage 4 and 5 timetable:

8:35am – registration
8:50am – period 1
9:50am – period 2
10:50am – break
11:15am – period 3
12:15pm – period 4
1:10pm – lunch
2:05pm – period 5
3:05pm – registration
3:10pm - dismissal

Yours faithfully



Izzy Jones
Headteacher