



Bexley Grammar School
Danson Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BL
A Specialist Language College and
IB World School
Tel: 020 8304 8538

Headteacher: Mr S C Elphick

e-mail: enquiries@bexleygs.co.uk

10 September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Twice-weekly testing, our weekly newsletter, ParentPay, dates for your diary, lockers and a plea - rather a long letter but there is a lot of information to share.

What a brilliant first full week back!

We completed the second test of all students with consent on Tuesday, about 2,400 tests in four days, sometimes peaking at a rate of about 200 tests per hour in our temporary testing station set up in the gym. Once again, the two-dozen parent helpers who gave up so much of their time and had to adapt to changes to the test and accompanying guidance since March were amazing - thank you all so much for your generous and cheerful support. And thank you to all parents/carers for getting your children to school at the right time last week to help the smooth running of this logistical nightmare. (I won't bore you with details of the back office misery that the national uploading system for schools caused but I would like to pay tribute to the incredible perseverance of office staff, and particularly Miss Bottomley and Mrs Aspill, in ensuring that your children's results were accurately uploaded.)

Of course all this expenditure of time and energy will go to waste if students, with your cajoling, do not keep up the twice-weekly testing for which they have been provided home testing kits. Now that we are not contact-tracing or isolating close contacts of those who test positive for Covid, you can only help us with two defences against the spread of the virus in school:

1. **Support your child's twice-weekly testing, and**
2. Be alert to symptoms in your child and **do not allow your child to come to school if there is any suspicion that they have the virus.**

Therefore:

1. Please be considerate and **arrange for your child to test twice weekly at home**, perhaps on a Sunday and a Wednesday, and [upload your results](#) as before. Any LFD test (our home test kits) result is **overridden by a subsequent PCR test, which you must arrange if your child tests positive. (Get a free PCR test)**
2. I do understand that if the PCR test you arrange is positive, you will be reluctant for your child to miss maybe a week and a bit of school. But they will be completing the work at home and you will be protecting about 20 other children from catching the virus and then having to miss school. Please do not allow your child in school if they may have the virus.

And lastly (on Covid matters), I have been asked by Bexley Borough, **if your daughter/son is 16 or over and has not yet had a Covid vaccination**, to alert you to a clinic in Bexley this weekend:

- Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 September - 9 am to 6 pm - Pfizer vaccine
- At Queen Mary's Hospital, Frognal Avenue, Sidcup. You can book via the national booking system or simply walk in.

Back in school, our canteen biometrics are now working well after a few hiccoughs - I hope everyone whose child is using the canteen has their ParentPay accounts topped up to allow their child access to food and drink.

If you haven't already browsed our weekly newsletter or aren't in the habit of doing so, I would urge you to spare it 5 or 10 minutes every week - there is so much useful information and news, including opportunities for your child, important safeguarding updates and useful dates of upcoming events. Each newsletter is emailed to you and then put on our [website, here](#), for you to peruse at your convenience.

Which reminds me - this Tuesday (14th) is an INSET day (closed to students). Please don't let your child be the one who shows up promptly at 8.15 a.m. on Tuesday!

Also worth noting, photographers will be in school the following Tuesday (21st) to take individual photos of years 7, 10 and 12. This is a change which allows **our year 10 students**, who missed the opportunity last year as year 9s, to have their photos updated. Current year 9 students will be offered photos next year when they are in year 10.

Further, to support your planning, **please note that our half term break in October includes Friday 22nd October and Monday 1st November**, a day either side of the main holiday week.

Please bear with us with regard to lockers. Having removed our one way systems and with more traffic around our corridors, we are managing the return of lockers to students very carefully and monitoring the effect on congestion. To this end, we are assigning lockers in steps, starting with years 7 and 8 (since they tend to be the smallest people) and moving to other year groups when we consider it is safe to do so. Please be patient and until your child is offered a locker and in the meantime, please encourage them to think carefully about exactly which books and equipment will be needed each day, packing only what is needed. Thank you.

Finally, a thank you and a plea about pick up and drop off at each end of the day. Those of you who have experienced Danson Lane and the roads around the school at the start and end of school do not need me to point out the dangers caused by 1) vehicles and 2) people waiting near the gates. So a **huge thank you to the vast majority of you who have made arrangements with your children that reduce the congestion near the school at these times.** Please be aware that parents of children at Danson Primary have no choice but to queue because they have to meet their children in the playground at specific times. However, if you wish to drop off and/or collect your child, please consider that our students (although year 7 children have only recently left primary school) can be trusted to walk, perhaps with a friend or two, a little distance from the school to be met away from the school gates, preferably beyond the roundabout or the width restriction. Parents queuing near the school (and thus restricting movement along the pavements) are inadvertently adding to the risks of all our children. And more importantly, cars stopping, even for a short time, outside the school, stop the flow of traffic and more often than not cause frustration and dangerous manoeuvres from other drivers, who may be local residents trying to get

to and from their homes. (And please do not park across their driveways!). Please plan thoughtfully to ease the dangerous congestion that can build up at the start and finish of school. Thank you.

My apologies for the length of this communication - there is always much to share as we settle into the routines that allow the school to run safely and smoothly for the year ahead. Thank you for getting to the end. I finish where I began - it has been a brilliant first full week. It is difficult to convey how wonderful it felt on Tuesday to have our very first assembly with a whole year group in the school hall since March 2020.

Best wishes,

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

Steve Elphick