

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we reach the end of the first half term, I thought it would be a good time to update you on a few things.

First and foremost, I want to commend your children on their resilience and the way that they have settled back into school life. I have written extensively about the numerous changes that we have had to make to the way the school is run, in order to do so in a way that is COVID-safe. We were acutely aware that students would have a great deal to adapt to. However, our students have coped brilliantly and have done themselves proud in the way they are keeping calm and carrying on despite all the differences to their usual school routines. Your continued support of your children and the school has been a huge part of that, so my sincere thanks to all our parents and carers for this.

Senior staff regularly walk the school and pop into lessons and we also did so on a formal basis in recent days. What we see for the most part are purposeful lessons, keen learners and a generally calm environment. Returning to school after a long period away was never going to be easy but we have plenty of systems and staff in place to help support students and teachers maintain an orderly and focussed atmosphere. I would therefore also like to take this opportunity to formally thank the staff at JOG for their efforts and resilience too; we are all adapting to this new normal.

There has been much to celebrate already. I'll save the individual stories for the revised JOG newsletter that will come out early in Term 2. However, I'd like to highlight that our attendance has been 3% higher than the national average for the term and that we've handed out nearly 10,000 positive behaviour points in the first 7 weeks of the term! It goes to show what a positive place JOG truly is.

COVID-19 updates

As I write, data from West Berkshire Council shows that schools in our area have had relatively few positive cases of coronavirus since the start of term. So far, JOG has not been among those schools although we remain ready to react accordingly should the need arise. All of us need to continue to be vigilant and follow the 'Hands, Face, Space' strategy from the government and we recently held assemblies in year group bubbles, to remind students of our expectations in relation to COVID and their conduct in general.

I think it is timely therefore, to offer a reminder of the following key points:

- Students must follow all instructions from staff around the daily routines and health guidance.
- Student should wash their hands regularly and sanitise when in classrooms, stay within their bubble and avoid physical contact wherever possible
- Face masks are required in all corridors and communal areas during school hours
- Face masks are required on all school buses and a legal requirement on public transport
- Failure to comply with any of the rules around COVID-19, both in school and travelling to and from school, can and will be sanctioned

As I stated above however, generally our students have adapted admirably to changes in our routines and this can only help to prevent transmission of the virus. The best education we can offer is by having the school remain fully open.

There is lots of useful information and resources on the COVID-19 tab on our website, which can be found here: <http://www.johnogauntschool.co.uk/219/covid-19>.

Remote Learning

Mrs Morgan has been leading a significant piece of work developing our contingency planning for remote education. We have comprehensive plans in place to support students who need to self-isolate and these cover the full range of scenarios relating to COVID-19 isolations and any form of lockdown. Essentially, if your child needs to self-isolate due to COVID, then as long as they are well enough, they will be given the resources to continue some form of learning at home. Mrs Morgan has written to you separately with full details in due course but there is plenty of information on the COVID-19 tab on our website I mentioned above. May I offer a polite reminder that, unless self-isolating or unwell due to other reasons, full attendance at school remains the legal requirement for JOG students.

Uniform and mobile devices

As the term started, I set out clear expectations to students that uniform in school was a non-negotiable. Having said that, with a return to school after so long and some reported delays through suppliers, we took a common-sense approach where there were minor issues. However, I reiterate that JOG is a uniform school and there should now be no reason to prevent any child from full compliance with our uniform policy. We do reserve the right to sanction for non-compliance with the school code of conduct, including our uniform policy. After the half term break we will be checking uniform closely and contacting home where necessary.

Furthermore, as we are fast approaching the colder months, I would like to offer a reminder of the following:

- Hoodies are not permitted at any time, and school blazers are a requirement
- Jumpers should be a plain dark colour, no logo/writing other than the JOG logo is permitted
- Coats should be of a plain dark colour
- School shoes must be Black (not boots or trainers), sensible, safe and suitable for the task – maximum heel height 4cm. They must be worn at all times in school, unless playing sports at break times or for PE

A copy of our full uniform policy can be found here:

http://upload.reactcdn.co.uk/johnogaunt/uploads/asset_file/3_352_uniform-policy-may18.pdf

We understand that, from time-to-time there are unforeseen issue with uniform, such as items of clothing being damaged. To help with this, we have introduced a uniform pass system that can be requested and issued if we feel there is a good reason. The pass is intended to deal with exceptional circumstances only and I must reiterate that our expectation is that all students fully adhere to the uniform policy. If your son or daughter does have need to request a pass, please write them a note.

I would also appreciate your support in reminding your son/daughter that mobile phones/devices must be switched off and away in their bag. Their use is not permitted unless instructed by a member of staff. If you and your child need to communicate urgently, there are phones in school that should be used to do so.

Promotional Video

I just wanted to draw your attention to the promotional video that we filmed as part of our 'Virtual Opening Evening' earlier this month. We really think that it captures the essence of all that is great about John O'Gaunt because it features some of our students taking all the important lead roles. In the current climate of COVID, it's also nice to be reminded of the colour and joy that we see every day here.

Mock Exams

Details have gone out to parents separately about the arrangements for the Year 11 mock examinations that start the first week back after the half term break. We wish them good luck in taking another important step in their final year with us. If you could remind your children to be vigilant around school and be aware of the need to be mindful of this, I am sure our Year 11 students would be most grateful.

Finally, I wish you and your family a safe and restful half term break. Thank you again for your ongoing support of your children and the school.

Yours sincerely,



