



23 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach half-term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in making the reopening of school to all students as smooth as possible, as well as update you on next steps and key information for after half term.

We are very proud of how our students have followed and adapted to our COVID-19 protocols and new ways of working since we reopened over 7 weeks ago. Despite the high levels of engagement with remote learning last summer, we know that the best place for students to learn is in school with their peers and teachers and I have been impressed with the commitment and focus shown by our students. At the time of writing, the majority of students have attendance of 99% or higher, 749 students have received 0 or only 1 behaviour point and over 25,000 merits have been issued to recognise students' successes. Given the changes we have all had to adapt to quickly, this is a strong acknowledgement of the students' achievements.

This year's examination groups (Years 11 and 13) have demonstrated incredible resilience - coping admirably with some of the initial uncertainty at national level regarding the scheduling and nature of next year's exams. This has been particularly evident with the numbers of Year 11 students attending lesson 6 revision sessions.

Not to be outdone, at the younger end of the school, our Year 7 and 8 students have embraced our vocabulary development program 'Bedrock' - completing a huge number of hours and showing significant progress with their vocabulary. We are thrilled that this has been so well received and utilised by students, as we know developing confident voices is key to future success. Year 9 have embraced the opportunity to personalise their curriculum through the options carousel, and Year 10 have settled swiftly into their new GCSE courses and options. Year 12 students, despite missing out on the opportunity to take their GCSEs this summer, have not had their enthusiasm for study diminished in the slightest and have made a flying start to their new courses, in one of our largest Sixth Form intakes in many years.

I would also like to thank all those who have been involved in the production of our Virtual Open Evening digital resources, which are available on the school's website; any prospective parent could not fail to be impressed by our articulate students.

As promised back in September, our systems and protocols have been under constant review, and we are now able to take the next step in requiring students to revert to normal school uniform from Monday 2 November. We have updated our Risk Assessment and reviewed our provision for PE and, with additional cleaning provision and additional changing facilities, we will move to

reopening changing facilities in PE. This means that, **after half term, students should no longer arrive or leave school in PE kit** and will be able change back out of sports clothing after a games lesson into warm, dry school uniform. Further details can be found in the updated Risk Assessment on the school's website.

Continuing with the theme of updating COVID-19 related protocols, I would also ask that you keep the school informed regarding test outcomes over the half term break. To ensure that these are picked up promptly please contact us using the following email address: **covid@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk** between 24 October and 1 November. It is essential that, if your child tests positive, we are able to check whether any close contacts need to be identified and isolated.

Finally, I would like once again to thank you and the staff for helping us make the full return as normal an experience for students as possible and wish everyone a restful and safe half-term break.

Yours sincerely

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

James Shapland
Headteacher