



28 May 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians

It has, quite simply, been a complete pleasure to be with your boys again this term. I write on the final morning of this half-term and, despite the local situation being well documented in the national press, we have not had a single case of COVID onsite – a blessing, given a term of assessments for the Fifth Form and Upper Sixth Form, but also for all boys who have missed a lot of face-to-face school in the last year. I thank you all for your care in this respect. As a result, we have been able to do all sorts of things we could not consider even a few weeks ago. On a personal front, I thoroughly enjoyed having the Fourth Form boarders for a barbeque last week (they were a delight) and taking boarders for nets on Wednesday evenings – at the first session, I took my kit, just in case only one or two boys turned up and I had to have a bat; in the event, 50 turned up! We have had some super evenings since then. The classroom has been productive, and the boys doing assessments and end of year exams have been well disciplined in their revision; it has felt good.

As term goes on, we do still hope to be able to relax some of the rules (for instance, parents at matches); but, given the current local situation, I am not sure yet how possible that will be. Not for the first time in the last year, I am sorry that things are not clearer. We do, however, hope to be able to hold a suitably celebratory last day of term, subject to all restrictions at the time, and our plans on this front are below.

### **Speech Day – Saturday 3 July**

Saturday 3 July is the last day of term for all boys.

We aim to run as close to 'normal' a Speech Day as possible this year. To that end, **all parents of Upper Sixth boys** will be invited to Chapel (assuming we are allowed at that time) with their sons for the final time at about 9am; this will be followed by coffee in the Dining Hall and then a prize giving in the Great Hall. This will be an Upper Sixth event; all other year groups will have year group assemblies, which are likely to involve live transmission of that main event, and will be for pupils and staff only.

**At noon, all members of the community (parents, staff and boys) are invited to drinks on the lawn** in front of the school (again, rules permitting). It is a House-based event and usually a really lovely way to end the school year and say goodbye to Tutors, Housemasters and teachers, as well as each other. I do hope that as many of you as possible can come, before taking your boys off for the summer holidays.

No matter which year group your son is in, please be aware, obviously, of the need for personal responsibility so far as COVID is concerned. Do consider this, for instance, if you are off on holiday the following week – you will each have your own thoughts on risk in that case!

## **Upper Sixth Prize Giving Guest and Speaker**

I have invited our new Associate Governor, Leroy Knowles, to be our guest of honour at Speech Day this year; and he has kindly accepted. Mr Knowles attended the school between 1992 and 1997. He was quite a sportsman: a 1st XV rugby player and captain of the athletics team, he still holds no fewer than 10 Bedford School athletics records. He went on to study Economics and Management at St Anne's College in Oxford, representing the University at Twickenham three times and winning the Varsity Match triple jump! He started his career at JP Morgan and is currently a Managing Director in the Capital Markets Division of BNP Paribas.

He also acts as a role model, and mentors numerous individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds for 'UpReach' (a social mobility charity) and for the 'Open Private School' (linking disadvantaged children to industry). In November 2020, he was named as a 'Top 10 UK Inspirational Leader' at the Ethnicity Awards, which recognises senior leaders that are able to demonstrate they have helped others from less represented backgrounds, both within and beyond their organisation. We very much look forward to having Mr Knowles and his family with us.

I wish you all a good week.

With kind regards to all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Hodgson', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**James Hodgson**  
Head Master