



28 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

After a difficult end to spring term 1 for our community, we returned to campus today following a week where the escalating situation involving the Ukraine has been on every news and social media channel. We became aware that there was a growing concern amongst our student body because of the coverage they had seen online. We therefore took the decision this morning to share with every mentor group the facts as we know them about the conflict. We also made it clear that it is perfectly fine to feel worried/sad/scared about the situation, especially after the last two years where all of our lives have been turned upside down. We were really proud of the way that the student body listened and responded respectfully to the subject matter. We have also been so pleased with the welcome our students have given the refugees who joined us just before we broke up for half term. Our students truly embody the values we have been sharing with them since we returned from lockdown: Kindness, Community and Inclusivity.

Uniform

As many of you will already be aware the government published statutory guidance in November 2021 regarding the cost of school uniforms. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>

As a Trust we have begun to respond to this by having a discussion across the three regions. On the basis of these discussions as a campus we will now be revising our school uniform policy to ensure that we make our uniforms as affordable as we can. This will include our PE kit as well. We want to make sure that you are informed as early as possible so that you are aware of what we are looking to do going forward.

Along with the other academies in our Trust, we will be retaining two items of uniform as they exist now:

Our blazer with the piping and badge

Our college ties

We will be phasing in our new policy, as we appreciate that, if your children have not grown out of their current uniform, you shouldn't have to purchase items that would increase your costs unnecessarily. With regards to the PE kit we will provide our sports teams who represent the school in competitions with a team kit. We also want to make clear right at the outset that items of PE kit with commercial branding will not be allowed for PE lessons.

We also want to flag up now that the Trust board members will require all schools across the regions to enact a policy where there is a zero tolerance of facial piercings. This will be in place from September 2022 and will cover nose piercings, tongue piercings etc. We will be retaining the policy of one pair of stud earrings as we have currently.

Please look out for a separate letter giving greater details about our ideas at this stage. We will be welcoming views from parents as we co-create the policy with you.

Covid

The announcements by the government about the removal of restrictions have not really had much impact at all on what we were already doing as a school.

If staff or students have symptoms and test positive, we will ask them to self-isolate as per the guidance before half term. The regime now is to test on day 5 and day 6 and if both tests are negative then the person can return to school. We still have a lot of Covid testing kits on site which families can request if their children do show the usual symptoms. What is no longer happening is asymptomatic testing of children or adults who might have come into contact with someone else who has the illness. So, unless your child is showing symptoms you do not need to test. If there is an outbreak, then we are required to let public health know and obviously we shall respond according to their advice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Thomas'.

Sylvia Thomas
Principal of Banbury Aspirations Campus