



The Dixie Grammar School

Nursery • Junior • Senior

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ear Parents

It has been wonderful to witness students enjoying being back in school and it is quite a relief to hear the chatter and bustle of school life return to the school building. Teachers have assessed carefully the progress of students and whilst the vast majority can be confident they are exactly where they should be in terms of their learning, gaps are being plugged for the few students who need some extra support.

**Academic Years 6-10**

Homework will resume for Years 6-9 after the holiday and end of year exams will take place for the two weeks prior to half term (17-28 May). Please be reassured that students in Years 6-10 do not need to revise over the holidays—revision in class will be a priority from the start of term—this will be sufficient. Some students will be asked to catch up on some critical tasks but this will be communicated to you by the relevant Head of Section. Exams for Year 6 students will be ‘open book’; they will test students’ understanding and provide a first insight to the exam process. Year 7 students will be allowed to use their own personally made revision materials in their exams - a great chance to learn whether their preparation style is successful. Year 8 students and above will sit exams in the traditional way - with plenty of time to refine their skills ahead of GCSE examinations.

**Adjustments to our Method of Working**

The Dixie road map out of Covid restrictions is of course dependent on government advice and will be continually evaluated. We hope that after Easter, government guidance will be such that it will be possible to adjust some school life - the re-establishment of co-curricular activities at lunch and after school is a priority. To support this we will be enlarging our ‘bubbles’; we propose to allow some interaction for students in Sectional groups rather than Year groups. We also expect to be able to allow students to move around the site to their subject specialist teaching rooms - this will help to break up the day for them and we are all very hopeful we will no longer require students to wear masks whilst working in a classroom. We anticipate that the wearing of masks will remain a requirement in internal communal areas. The adjustments we plan to make will facilitate further improvements to our break and lunchtime catering provision. Registers and seating plans of all lessons and co-curricular activities will be in place so that we have the necessary information to ‘track & trace’ close contacts should a positive case be identified and as you would expect, all changes will be thoroughly risk-assessed.

**Testing**

You will be aware that your son / daughter has brought home one further pack of LFD testing kits. The government has made it clear they wish us all to continue home testing twice weekly and it remains the case that all tests should be reported to the NHS as per the instruction leaflet AND to school via the [attached form](#). It is especially important that students test themselves on the evening of Wednesday 14 April ahead of their return to school on Thursday 15 April. Please do notify us immediately on [info@dixie.org.uk](mailto:info@dixie.org.uk) of any positive cases. In an update to guidance, ***routine testing is not required*** within 90 days of a positive test.



## Summer Term: Year 11 and Upper Sixth

### Year 11

There were some aspects of the first lockdown last March that enabled us to think creatively about how we deliver our provision. One aspect that we would very much like to maintain and develop is our provision for Year 11 and Upper Sixth in the second half of the summer term.

Last year, we were able to remotely offer A Level transition courses to help bridge the move from GCSE to A Level. These proved to be invaluable, enabling students to ensure that they are making the right decisions about subject choices and facilitating a swift start to A Level teaching in September.

This year, with students able to attend school in person, we would like to go one step further. After the May half-term break, Year 11 students will become our new Lower Sixth, taking on all of the privileges and responsibilities that come with being a Sixth Form student. They will have timetabled transition lessons in all of their A Level subjects, study periods, full access to the Sixth Form House and permission to leave the site at break and lunch. They will also be expected to attend sessions on study skills and to begin work towards the Dixie Leaders Award, which involves working with younger pupils to support their learning. When current Year 11 students return after the May half-term break, we would therefore ask that they do so in accordance with the Sixth Form dress code.

We are now asking students who are staying at Dixie to select three A Level subjects from the start, rather than initially taking four. One advantage is that this has allowed us to increase teaching time in each subject, whilst our transition courses will allow students to be certain that they have selected the subjects that are right for them.

This is an exciting extension to our provision for those students moving from Year 11 into our Sixth Form and we would strongly encourage everyone intending to stay at Dixie to attend. Those students who are leaving Dixie to study A Levels elsewhere are, of course, welcome to attend after May half-term, but they will be expected to meet all of our expectations in terms of dress, attendance at transition lessons and extra-curricular involvement. Those leaving to study other courses may be able to secure work experience during this time

### Upper Sixth

Last year, during lockdown, we offered Upper Sixth students the opportunity to take transition courses in the subject for which they have applied to university. Students were paired with a member of staff with relevant expertise in the subject area and they met weekly for one-to-one discussion.

We would again like to offer this provision to our Upper Sixth. This is an entirely optional programme and the exact nature of courses will vary from discipline to discipline, but the aim is that students are given a taste of the work and the independent study skills required at undergraduate level. As last year, sessions will take place remotely, with students and staff meeting online.

More details of both our Year 11 and Upper Sixth summer term provision will be sent out after the Easter break.



## Online safety at home

I know that many of us in the Dixie community will this week be welcoming the easing of lockdown restrictions and the increased social contact, with groups of six or two households now able to meet outdoors. Outdoor exercise and organised sport will certainly bring welcome respite from our current routines. However technology remains a crucial part of our lives – it is hugely valuable for education, as well as an invaluable way of keeping in touch with friends and family. It is important therefore that we continue to consider ways in which we can keep young people safer online.

## Online gaming

Online games are social activities and most have features that allow young people to chat with others whilst they play. For information about the positives of gaming, the risks of 'in-game chat' and measures you can take to help protect your child, please visit: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/in-game-chat/>

## Social Media

You may be wondering when is the best age to let your child have a social media account or have some concerns if they are already using them. For advice and guidance, please visit: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media/>

Most social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age before they can register and whilst most young people have positive experiences socialising online, it can be easy for young people to share things or post things they wish they hadn't. The simplest way to have information about your child removed from a website or app is to contact the site itself.

Some of the most popular apps, sites and games are designed to make it easy to share information online. But once information is shared, you can never be sure who has seen it, saved it or shared it. If your child enjoys being online and uses social media apps, games and more, it's important you know how to protect their personal information and support them to make safe choices about what they share online. This parent's guide gives useful tips on how to support your child to make safe choices: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/parents-guide-to-personal-information2/>

## Steps you can take to help keep your child safer online

**Have an ongoing conversation:** Continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use, and what they like and don't like and any concerns about being online. Discuss with them when to unfollow, block or report.

**Make sure they know where to go for support:** Remind your child that they can always speak to you or an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried or upset. Remind them that they won't be in trouble and that you are there to help.

**Make sure they know about NCA CEOP:** Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse to NCA CEOP at <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> and get support from a specialist Child Protection Advisor.



## Clubs and Societies

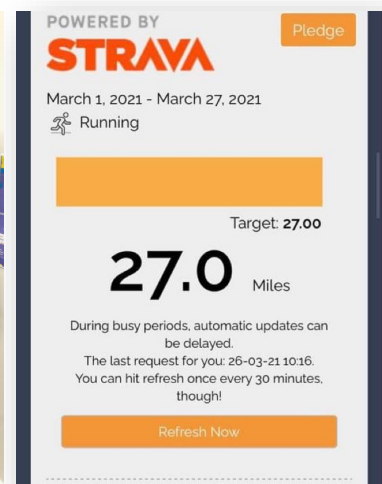
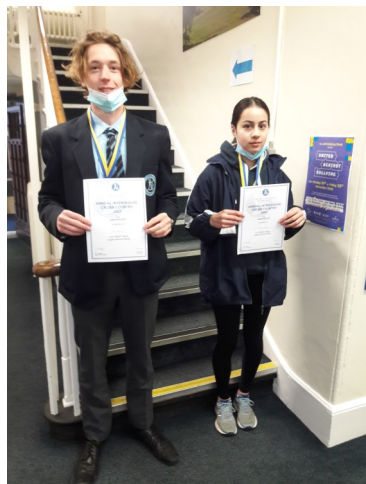
From cloud dough to pom poms and knitting to history, our clubs and societies bring huge variety and colour to school life for our pupils. Assuming the current movement towards a return to more normal circumstances continues, our timetable of lunchtime activities will be refreshed and relaunched early in the summer term and we will be encouraging all pupils to make the most of this and find something to get involved with.

## End of Easter Term Assembly

The plethora of awards, trophies, certificates, rosettes and chocolate distributed during the end of term assembly underlined to me the wide nature of pupils' achievements this term, despite the challenges we have all faced. I will leave you with images taken this morning of those receiving sporting awards following the House Cross Country and ISA Limitless Skills challenges, as well as pictures from the fundraising challenge undertaken by two in the Lower Sixth.

With my best wishes for a restful break and happy and healthy Easter.

*Richard Hyman*



'Robyn and Mason have been undertaking the charity runs. I can't speak for Mason but it's been a huge challenge for Robyn as she hates running with a passion. She went from not being able to run a mile without walking to being able to run it non stop whilst shaving 2.30 mins off her time. She went out in the cold, wet and dark to complete it. She has raised £440.50 so far for student mental health via MIND.'