



1 September 2020

Dear Parents

It gives me great pleasure to write to welcome back the boys to Durston House next week. I hope you have all had an excellent summer break, and are excited about returning to school. No matter how successful the virtual learning provision might have been, there can be no substitute for young people being in school alongside each other, learning, socialising and pursuing the things they value. I am delighted to welcome back the boys so that they can resume their education properly.

Over the summer my colleagues have worked incredibly hard in ensuring that the school can restart safely next week. As we approach the detail of the return to school, Mr Murphy, Deputy Headmaster, will be writing separately to explain how things will work for the boys from next Monday, and to run through with you how we will begin this academic year.

One happy legacy from our remote learning provision is our new-found confidence in using *Zoom* to communicate and we will be writing shortly with details regarding the informal parent meetings normally planned for this time of year.

Our overriding ambition is that your son and every other boy at Durston House enjoys a truly holistic education this year, engaging fully and with energy in the classroom, playing sport with each other, and once again, making the most of the range of activities and opportunities that a best Durston education has to offer.

For that to happen we may have to compromise on some of our usual ways of working. I am careful to resist making pronouncements on what might happen in the future, choosing instead to give ourselves the flexibility to make judgements wherever we can in the best interests of our families, and in line with our extensive, detailed and comprehensive risk assessment and contingency planning, whilst also working closely with our local health protection team in Ealing and Public Health England.

I hope, that should it come to it, you will understand why, on occasion we may have to make difficult choices or respond swiftly to events in the country at large. As difficult and uncomfortable decisions may seem, please rest assured that they are made with the interests of our pupils and staff first, to allow the school to remain open, with the boys properly stimulated and maximising their experience at school.

Never has it been clearer that we really are in this together. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my most sincere gratitude to you for the support you have shown for the school during lock down. Your continued support will be crucial as my colleagues and I begin this unusual academic year. I am equally grateful to Mr Murphy for his communication and regular updates over the past summer term. We know how important it is to communicate well, and to remain sensitive to the circumstances and needs of our individual families and boys. The pastoral care, safety and wellbeing of your son is paramount and I want him to flourish in all aspects of school life at Durston this coming year.

Together we will ensure that all of our pupils have a successful and enjoyable year at Durston. I have been looking forward for some time and with great anticipation to get to know the Durston community properly, and I very much look forward to meeting you in due course.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Giles Entwisle
Headmaster