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24 September 2021

Dear Parent or Carer

### Greetings from the Year 12 Pastoral Team

We are writing to you via email now that we have successfully entered all the contact details of our new Year 12 students onto our data system. It always takes a little while to do this after the start of term, so please accept our apologies for any delay. We have of course already written to you several times with hand-delivered letters but these can go awry if 'student-post' is used. Sorry if this has happened and you feel that you have not heard from us. We do try and minimise postal correspondence and correspondence more generally because all of us live such busy lives, and generally we try and write no more often than once a half term – this is why our letters are often substantial beasts, such as this one. Any letters sent home are of course posted to our website at <https://www.tallispost16.com/letters-home.html>

### **Year 12 Parents' Welcome Evening**

This informal event took place on Wednesday 22 and we hope it was helpful to those who attended. We presented briefly and took questions from the audience. The presentation will be posted to [tallispost-16.co.uk](http://tallispost-16.co.uk) shortly. Please do look it over.

### **Lanyards and IDs are now mandatory for site entry and must be worn around the neck on site**

An important thing to report to you is that on Monday 27 September we anticipate being able to issue your Year 12 child with their lanyard and identity card – it takes a little while to import all the photographs, print them and validate them for the magnetic locks at the gate. Students must use their card to 'buzz in' and 'buzz out' of Tallis, just like an Oyster card, and must wear their card around their neck on a lanyard when on site. Once we have issued them, after a short 'teething period', students cannot enter site without them, as site security will turn students away if they cannot be shown. Would you speak with your child upon receipt of this letter so that they hear about the importance of lanyard ID being worn around the neck when on site 'in stereo', as it were? Many thanks!

### **'Wisepay' details coming to you shortly**

Wisepay is the school's electronic payment system and allows you to deposit money against a student's account so that they can use it to buy food, for example. Your password reset link so that you can set up an account was sent to you for today, Friday 24 September. [finance@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:finance@thomastallis.org.uk) is the email address to use if you have trouble with Wisepay – the finance team will assist.

### **Letting us know about absence**

Please email Mr Bell on [abell@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:abell@thomastallis.org.uk) if your child cannot attend school. Mr Bell is also an excellent person to speak with about pastoral matters more generally. Absence calls and texts are generated by him using the contact details you supplied – if your contact details change, please update him immediately.

*inquisitive • collaborative • persistent • disciplined • imaginative*

### **Bursary applications - deadline**

Bursary applications must be made by the deadline of Monday 27 September. We have spoken to your child several times in assembly about this. One level of bursary is available to students who receive Free School Meals, and another lesser level to families who receive income tax credits. The application form can be filled in quickly we believe and we would encourage all who might be eligible to apply.

### **'Silent Study' as the 10<sup>th</sup> hour of each course is about to begin**

We are also about to start Silent Study. Every student has at least one additional hour of silent study for each of their A-levels or equivalent. We cannot place these on timetables until we have our study venues staffed, and, again, this always takes a little time at the start of term. Silent study will begin on Monday 27 September. Children who would like to move their silent study periods, which are initially machine-allocated, should speak to Mr Bell and he will help.

### **Building up study hours – the 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. target.**

We said at our Year 12 Parents Induction Evening on 22 September – and have said to the students repeatedly already – that a sensible amount of study to put in to achieve well is a 35-40 hour week, with perhaps a peak of more hours of study towards exams than this if someone is aiming for exceptional grades. Lessons amount to about 15 hours a week for most students. Teachers set about 12-15 hours a week of homework for most students. That leaves at least ten hours in a typical '9-5' schedule which should fairly soon be filled with independent study – that is, student-chosen revision of topics that have already been taught. We know that the very many 'high-flying' students at Tallis – last year 83 students obtained AAB grades or better – are always people who revise independently a good deal. Many students in Year 12 are now beginning to 'slot in' independent revision periods into their timetables, building them up week-on-week as more syllabus content is taught and so becomes available for independent revision. Your child may not be working a 9-6 week of lessons, homework and private study yet – but most students in the year will be by Christmas, and all of the students aiming for very high grades will be. This steady approach also builds confidence and minimises exam stress. Would you be willing to speak to your child about the importance of a steady approach to building up the amount of steady work they are doing? Mr Bell, who supervises the Silent Study Area, can add in extra hours upon request. A very sensible idea is to aim for full days at school – another is to always be in school for 8.30, every day of the week – this has the additional benefit of being easier for parents to monitor. Our study area is open from 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. or so, and often later midweek.

### **We will soon ask staff how your child is getting along**

We will shortly also ask your child's staff how your child is coping with the demands of sixth form study. We ask staff to comment on their perception of your child's independent effort, on their organisational capacity, and on their resilience. We won't report our findings to you initially, as at first we focus just on students who haven't settled to study yet. If we are worried about how effortful a student is, we will often add extra invigilated private study to their timetable and take a register for it. Similarly, if we think that someone needs a hand with their organisation, we will spend a little time with them pastorally working on this.

### **The first in-class assessments are coming at the end of October**

In-class assessments begin the week of the 24 October, just after half-term. We take the view that assessing children 'little and often' begins the important task of training for exam conditions, familiarises students with expectations and reduces stress – and testing also 'sets' learning. Production of material in exam conditions i.e. with only the memory to rely on is probably the single most effective way of transferring ideas and content to long-term memory. We make much of practice testing, therefore.

### **Helping your child's imagination: their vision about why they are in the sixth form**

Our next pastoral period on Wednesday 6 October will focus on the difference between visions and dreams. We think it is very important for sixth form students to develop the Tallis habit of focused imagination, so that they are able even early on in their sixth form career to identify the thing or things to which they hope their studies will lead – and then they can work on breaking down the journey to what they want into manageable sections. It is very motivating to have a clear goal in mind which is reached by signposts or steps, much more so than having a vague idea about becoming e.g. a lawyer. We use the Michael Apted 'Seven Up' documentary as a way into this. Please – *ask your child about their Tutorial on Wednesday 6 October*. It helps, you see, for people to tell others their goals, as this amounts to a public commitment to them and to the focused work required to reach them.

### **My Child at School login details**

We have just moved to Bromcom as our 'Management Information System' and are getting better at using it. My Child at School (or MCAS) is the Parent Portal that links to our school system. Student timetables are shared using it, and it is also where staff are setting homework and (increasingly) recording its completion. You have already been sent a login, and your child already has one. Please use your login to look at your child's timetable and their completion of work. If you are having issues with your login, please contact our IT helpdesk - [helpdesk@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@thomastallis.org.uk) and they will assist. The school also uses Microsoft Teams and if any lessons have to be online this year they will be delivered using it. Your child's MS Teams login is their school email and password, and this is also their Office 365 login. This is the same login that they use for their Bromcom Student Portal. Please do note – your child's Office 365 account comes with the right to a home install of Office if this is not available on a computer at home.

### **Computers at home and 'Tech for Tallis'**

Please let us know if your Year 12 child does not have decent access to a computer at home. 'Tech for Tallis' is the school's way of repurposing donated machines for students and we may be able to help with a machine from our stock. On this note – if you have a slightly older machine, particularly a laptop, that is no longer in use, would you consider donating it to the school so that it can be refurbished and used by a student without good access to IT?

### **COVID Vaccination update: walk-in clinics**

Vaccinating young people should help to reduce the need for young people to have time off school and should reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools. The main purpose of the COVID-19 childhood vaccination programme is therefore to provide protection to the young people who receive the vaccine and to reduce the disruption to face-to-face education this winter.

All 16 and 17 year olds should have been contacted by the NHS regarding their first dose of Covid-19 vaccination. Timings for a second dose, if to be provided, will be confirmed later. Anyone who is 16 years old and over can get a vaccine from a walk-in Covid-19 vaccination site without an appointment. There is no requirement to be registered with a GP, or to bring any ID. The clinic locator link is: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/>

More information on the COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccination programme and how it will work, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions, is included in the [Public Health England guidance for schools](#).

[NHS leaflets](#) are available to provide more information to parents, carers and eligible young people on the vaccine, including how it works and what to expect after having the vaccine. Accessible versions and translations are also available.

**COVID Vaccination update: vaccination in school on the 14 October for Year 12 students, if they choose**

The NHS's School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) team is legally responsible for the delivery of any vaccine in school. They visit us several times every year for this purpose and always have done. The Greenwich SAIS vaccination team will be at Tallis on the **14 October** to administer COVID vaccines to all Year 12 students who want them. Hence, if it is more convenient for your 16 and 17 year old to receive their COVID vaccination in school, they may choose to be vaccinated in school. They do not need parental consent as they can consent themselves.

**'Form 8' for exam dispensation**

Form 8 is the form from your child's previous school which we must have if they are to be granted exam dispensation, such as extra time and so on. The deadline for submission of Form 8s is **October 1**.

Many thanks, as always, for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Astill  
Head of Year 12  
Thomas Tallis School

Jon Bradshaw  
Assistant Headteacher: Head of Sixth Form