

2nd October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Wow, how fast is time flying by? I can't believe we are now in October, although you can definitely feel that the weather has changed. Coats, scarves and warmer clothing have reappeared and summer clothes have been put away.

In the Spring term, when we were planning the arrangements for September, we had no real idea of how long the arrangements would be in place. Our students have been amazing at adapting to the "new normal". However, now that the weather is turning colder and wetter we have had to look at solutions for keeping our students safe and secure, whilst still giving them indoor access at both break and lunch times. We have also learned from the original arrangements that we are wasting precious learning time as a result of staff travelling from one side of the building (bubble) to another for lesson changeovers. As a result I have been consulting with staff on the best way to move this forward. I also appreciate that some students have struggled with only having the opportunity to purchase food at either break or lunch. We have, therefore, decided that following October Half term we will introduce the following changes.

A two week timetable will be introduced, so that students will have double lessons for periods 1,2,3 and 4. This means that we can introduce a staggered break and lunch, so that each year group will have a dedicated time each day where they will have access to food at break and lunch and also have the option of being inside or outside. Lessons, for some year groups will be doubles; however within this lesson time students will also have their break and lunch time. The length of the break and lunch time (i.e. half an hour) will not change; however, the time of this may change depending on the year group. Prior to the half-term break, I will share with you further details of these new arrangements, and what this will look like for each year group.

I hope that these new arrangements will help to ease the recent difficulties of students' purchasing food and will ensure that all students have plenty of time to both eat and relax at both break and lunch time if they wish. However, we will have to adapt our menu as a result, as our Catering staff will also need to adapt to these new arrangements. Again, we will share the revised menus with you prior to the October half term break. Everything else will remain the same, e.g.; where the students are based and which toilets, exit and entry points they use.

I have also been made aware that some of our Year 9 students have expressed discomfort due to the stools that are in place in the science rooms, which constitute their "bubble". We are, therefore, currently working with a new supplier and the stools will be changed for more appropriate chairs over the next few weeks.

In response to the feedback received from yourselves and students, we have developed some Apps to provide you with all the information that you need. As technology plays a major part in our society, especially for our young people, we thought that Apps would be the best way forward. We have developed a Student wellbeing App, where students can access information on mental health and ask for any support they may need via our wellbeing team. We have created an enrichment App which gives access to all of the enrichment activities on offer each day. Finally we have also introduced a catering App, which lists the menu for each day/week and the cost of each option. We are also trialling an ordering service for our Sixth Form students, and so far the feedback has been very positive. All Apps work on any device and are free of charge. Please see the links below for further information.

Super 6 (Year 11 only) <https://orasuper6.glideapp.io/>

Ora Enrichment <https://oraenrichment.glideapp.io/>

Ora Catering <https://oracatering.glideapp.io/>

Ora Well being <https://orawellbeing.glideapp.io/>

As the Principal of Ormiston Rivers Academy, I am constantly reviewing the work that goes on in the academy and my role is to ensure that we continue to improve. I hope that you recognise the hard work that goes on every single day from all staff within our school. I would therefore be very appreciative if you could complete the parental survey via the link below; to provide us with your feedback on how the academy is doing, and to enable us to review anything that may need further development; as well as allowing me to share with staff our successes, and what is going well. I am grateful for your time in completing this.

<https://forms.gle/ae2MZ6sQxbnQhavs5>

Finally, and as I have said before, I am so proud of our academy and our students. I love walking around during lesson times when possible, and at every break and lunch time, just chatting to the students. That is the best part of the job, it has been wonderful to see students engaged in lessons and grasping new knowledge for the first time. Our Year 11 Mentor Masterclasses are now up and running, and it has been wonderful to see how the vast majority of our Year 11 students have approached and embraced this extra provision in a positive way. In all lessons that I have visited, students are engaging in a wide range of learning activities which has been great to see. On Wednesday I was fortunate enough to see our new Year 7 students making apple or banana muffins; all of which looked delicious. All academy staff have worked very hard to adapt the curriculum to ensure that all students are still enabled to access a full and rich curriculum, to ensure that they do not fall behind, that they continue to make progress, and that they are happy and fulfilled.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our endeavours..

Emma Baker
Principal