



3rd September 2021

Letter of introduction from Rea Mitchell and important information regarding the start of term and return of students - please read carefully

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am delighted to be able to write to you in what is my first communication as Headteacher of Robert May's School. I have had a purposeful Summer ensuring that I am absolutely ready to take up this important role - as well as making sure that I have had opportunities to enjoy the sunshine (on the rare occasions we have seen it!).

I want to share with you some important information about this academic year and would ask that you read this carefully.

COVID-19 Update

In response to the [Department for Education's updated operational guidance for step 4](#), we have made some changes to school operations.

- **Mixing and Bubbles:** students will no longer need to be separated into bubbles.
- **Face coverings:** students no longer need to wear a face covering in classrooms or communal areas but they are welcome to do so if they wish. Students will need to continue to wear face coverings on public and school transport.
- **School trips:** domestic day visits and overnight visits can go ahead.
- **Clinically extremely vulnerable students and staff:** should attend school, unless advised not to by their clinician or other specialist.
- **Close contact tracing:** schools will no longer be involved in contact-tracing and our students will no longer need to self-isolate if they are close contacts unless instructed to by the NHS.

We will continue to implement the Department of Education's control measures such as hand washing, cleaning regimes and ventilation.

Testing remains important in helping us to identify infection and reduce transmission and Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing arrangements commenced on 1st September in school. The schedule for in school testing can be found [here](#).

Following the 'in school' LFD tests, students will be provided with home test kits and encouraged to continue testing, twice weekly at home. If, following a LFD test, your child does test positive for COVID-19 your child will be required to self-isolate and book a further PCR test to confirm the result.

If the PCR test is taken within 2 days following a positive LFD result and is negative, your child will be able to return to school as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms. Access to remote education will be available to your child during their self-isolation period.

Please note that if your child does feel unwell, even if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms or their COVID-19 test is negative, they may still have an illness which

West Street
Odiham
Hampshire
RG29 1NA

t (01256) 702700

f (01256) 703012

e info@rmays.com

www.rmays.hants.sch.uk

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VAT Reg Number: 141579017

could be passed on to other people and we recommend that your child attends school when they are feeling better.

Uniform

As was communicated at the end of the Summer Term, please can I remind you of the uniform expectations at Robert May's School. Our aim is that Robert May's students present a neat, tidy and professional image of themselves both in school and out. Showing pride in their uniform and appearance is part of upholding the high standards that the school sets. The expectations listed below represent a summary of our existing school uniform policy. Students who are not adhering to these expectations will be challenged which may result in items being confiscated or an expectation to change.

School trousers	Must be traditional formal, black, straight leg long school trousers. No other trousers are allowed. Leggings are not allowed.
School skirts	This must be of the approved style and length (black box pleat which is on or just above the knee). It is best to start at knee length to allow for some growth during the year.
School shoes	These must be sensible black school shoes that take polish. Trainers, canvas shoes and boots are not allowed. Please can I remind you that students should not be wearing trainers, for example, black Nike Air Force.
Jewellery and piercings	The only acceptable jewellery in school is one small pair of metal studs. No other facial or body piercings or jewellery (including hooped earrings, lip or tongue piercings, rings, chains and bracelets) are allowed in school. If your child is having an additional piercing, then you must ensure that this has healed in good time for the return to school.
Makeup and hair	Students should not wear makeup which is obvious to the eye. Students must not wear coloured nail varnish. They must also not wear false or acrylic nails. Students should not dye their hair in extreme colours.
Coats	Students should wear plain coats which offer warmth and protection from the elements. Denim, suede or leather jackets and sweatshirts, tracksuit tops and hoodies are not allowed.

Mobile Phones

A reminder that Robert May's School is a mobile phone-free zone during the school day (8.25am - 2.25pm). This is to ensure that students are focused on their learning and able to develop their social skills without distraction. Occasionally, we find that students can create problems by messaging parents and carers when things happen during the school day e.g. if they feel ill or if they have fallen out with friends. This is not helpful. If there is a problem, then students should notify an appropriate member of staff. If they need to get an urgent message to you then they should go to Reception. Please support this by reiterating this message and not responding to messages from your child during the school day.

Start of Term

The start of term for our new Year 7 students is Monday 6th September at 8.25am. The start of term for Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 students is Tuesday 7th September at 8.25am.

Students should ensure that they have checked that they have all the equipment that they need for learning. This should include:

- A suitable bag to carry their school books and equipment.
- A pencil case with pens, pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener, a ruler, maths' set, scientific calculator etc.

Attendance

Excellent attendance underpins educational achievement. We aim that all students should have an attendance record of between 95% and 100%.

- If your child is not able to attend school, contact should be made before 8:00am, providing student name, tutor group, reason for absence and length of expected absence (if absence continues longer than expected, further contact should be made to provide an update).
- Contact should be via email to attendance@rmays.com or by leaving a message with the above information on the School's absence line on 01256 393144.
- If we have not received notification of any absence, for safeguarding purposes and attendance records, the Priority 1 contact will be emailed. Text messages will also be introduced during September 2021.
- If we have no explanation for a student absence, it will be recorded as an Unauthorised Absence.
- All planned absences, including medical/dental appointments, require you to submit a completed Student Absence Request form, this can be found on our school website, [here](#).
- Family holidays will not be authorised.

Home-School Communication

Home-school communication is so important to ensure that we work effectively in the best interests of the students. The list below outlines who to contact in the first instance for different scenarios:

- Form Tutor - for general questions/concerns about your child.
- Subject teacher - for academic questions relating to a specific subject.
- School office - for general questions about school.

The school day is busy and it is for this reason that we would advise you to initiate contact via email. We aim to acknowledge emails within 24 hours and operate a system whereby staff are not expected to respond to emails before 8.00am and after 5.30pm Monday to Friday; this is to ensure that staff are able to maintain a healthy work/life balance and are able to maintain high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school day. Please be aware that all of our teaching staff have teaching timetables and supervision duties and are involved in extracurricular activities and so may not be able to respond to emails or phone messages until after the children have left the school site.

If you wish to visit the school, you must make an appointment beforehand. We are unable to welcome visitors onto the site unless this has been pre-arranged.

If you have an urgent issue relating to the safety and/or welfare of a child, please contact the school office in the first instance who will be able to redirect you appropriately.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Information regarding extra-curricular activities and arrangements for late buses will be communicated separately. These will begin on Monday 13th September.

Transition Extra

We were delighted to welcome 210 Year 6 students in for a week over the Summer holiday for a transition week as they were unable to attend the traditional Transition days in June. This gave them the opportunity to get to know their way around the school. As well as a focus on academic work, there was lots of good fun from obstacle course competitions to car racing and from author visits to African drumming. If the smiles on the faces of the children were anything to go by, I think they are looking forward to starting their RMS journey.

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Estate and Digital Works

Over the Summer period, we have been very busy on site making improvements. These include:

- New windows and electrical and lighting improvements to the Main Block, Sports Hall and Gym funded by DfE capital grant the school successfully bid for.
- Phase 1- ICT classrooms upgrade increasing the size of ICT4, installing new PCs, 4 interactive screens and replacement of old air conditioning units.
- H5 corridor redeveloped to create 3 new Heads of Year offices.
- Student Support Centre relocated.
- Wi-Fi upgraded across the school.

Whilst most work has been completed, there are still some finishing touches occurring when bespoke desking will be installed into the ICT classrooms during October half term with the completion of new windows to Main Block.

Site Safety

Please can I remind Parents/Carers to drive safely on the school site. Please follow the signage and do not drive faster than 5mph. Parents/Carers must only drop off using the outer ring car park. Please do not use the road directly in front of the Invictus building.

I hope that your children are as enthusiastic about the start of the academic year as the staff are. I very much look forward to meeting with Parents/Carers over the coming year.

Yours faithfully,



Rea Mitchell
Headteacher