21st January 2022

Re: This is the Age of Aquarius!

Dear Parents,

I hope that this letter finds you safe and well in what has been a turbulent and tumultuous time in the wider world.

In the midst of the controversies surrounding the Prime Minister and his current and former friends, an announcement was made on Wednesday that facemasks for Year 7 and above no longer need to be worn in lessons (I fireflyed you about just that) and from 26th January facemasks are not necessary in communal spaces. They are still expected on school transport.

School policies, as always, will follow this guidance and if anyone wants to keep wearing a mask then I am happy for that to happen. We are still minimising the school meeting collectively and will reassess this at the end of this month (when we should also hear from Ofqual about any changes in examination content for the summer).

As we are on the cusp of a possibly profound change in the polity of the country I will say no more at this stage as a change at the top will doubtless have effects right the way down the pyramid. The coronavirus is a slippery and changeable thing both literally and metaphorically as we have all learned at to our great cost over these last months and years.

Moving on from the national to the local, I have some wonderful news to share with you. Mrs Smith, our Head of Art, has just been named Artist in Residence by the London Chamber Orchestra for the next three years (until the end of the season in 2025). This is a superb achievement for Mrs Smith and well-deserved, and we are all pleased as Mr Punch for her, and such recognition demonstrates her ability and also communicates more eloquently than I can that she is an exciting and dynamic member of staff who is bringing those big city skills to her teaching (in both the Senior and Junior Schools). Many congratulations and I have been told to ask that you <sshh> keep it off your social media at the moment as the LCO will break the news in their own way when they are good and ready. But strictly hush-hush, and between you and me, I wanted to share the good news.

Speaking of good news, Mr Harrison, who is Assistant Head Academic and Head of History, as well as being a Senior Examiner for the OCR History GCSE, and published textbook author, has now achieved what we History teachers refer to as ’24-carat immortality’: he has been commissioned to update the GCSE History textbook: ‘Modern World History’ by Ben Walsh. Every school in the known world uses Walsh’s seminal tome, indeed the Head of History at my previous school was wont to say, ‘if it is not in Walsh then it did not happen’. Now Mr Harrison has the power to change what has already taken place, I hope that he wields that immense power with care! What a wonderful achievement and congratulations to him and as with Mrs Smith above I am delighted that the school has such rock ‘n roll stars in the common room spreading their insights with our boys and girls.

Away from the teachers, and also on the topic of my old school, our first XI played them (Loughborough Grammar School – boo!) at football on Tuesday narrowly losing 3-2 which, bearing in mind my old school is more than three times bigger than us, and all boys, is an immense achievement. Well done chaps and I am sure that we will get revenge in the return leg at Pitsford (where I am tempted to introduce some of our FCV International Football Academy students into the team…\*).

A busy week and a busy start to term, and only three weeks to go until half-term! As the NFL Super Bowl will take place on the first Sunday of our half-term (which is great news for fans of the sport like me re: not getting up for work on the Monday after it), I will leave you with some sage advice from the late great Vince Lombardi, legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers and, in many ways, to my mind, one of the great motivational educators of the last century. He urged his players to leave it all out on the field as, if they held back any effort in the game then they only hurt themselves and instead emptying the tank during the competition would give them the best possible outcomes. Apposite advice from a wise man, and a manifesto for the next fifteen days of school.

Speak again soon,

CG Walker

\*only kidding about using semi-professional ringers in a petty-minded act of vengeance (honest).