



# THE GRANGE SCHOOL

*Mr V Murray – Headteacher*

4 January 2022

## **Happy New Year**

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you have had a fantastic break and have not been too affected by the recent Covid situation. I am getting in touch today to let you know about our latest response to the current pandemic situation. Alongside this, we must keep sight of maintaining high standards and good order in school, so I have taken this opportunity to remind you of our expectations around a few key points.

To achieve this, I ask for your support in reinforcing the following with your children, as we will do through tutor times during the first week in school.

### **Updated COVID measures from Wednesday 5 January 2022**

In line with government guidelines, we need to respond to the current increased risk of transmission of the Omicron variant. We need to return to mask wearing in class, as well as the existing safety measures of wearing masks around school from 5 January 2022. This expectation is for all staff and students, apart from those who are exempt. This expectation will be in place until 26 January 2022, then reviewed and further changes may be made if necessary.

Can we please ask you to ensure your son or daughter provide their own face coverings, a small amount of disposable masks will be made available in school for those who have forgotten or broken their mask.

Also, to reduce unnecessary challenge, if your son or daughter is exempt, can they be provided with and encouraged to display a sunflower badge or lanyard. We have issued a small number of these in school and have been reissuing them when lost, but we have very limited stock.

As you may be aware, we have been asked by the DfE to conduct one Lateral Flow Test on students as they return to school in January 2022. In order to minimise the impact upon your child's learning, we are planning to conduct these tests during the school day rather than stagger their return to school. All students should return to school as normal on Wednesday 5 January 2022.

**Although we are testing in school, please ensure to continue with Lateral Flow Testing from home and to test on Tuesday 4 January 2022 prior to returning to school.**

We will be conducting these tests by form groups on Wednesday 5, Thursday 6 and Friday 7 January 2022.

**If your child does NOT consent to this testing, please could you make sure they let the testers know, who will let them pass through the testing centre and return straight to their class.**

### **School Uniform – The highest expectations.**

We take great pride in ensuring our students look smart and ready to learn. Our uniform policy has not changed in recent years, so the expectations are clear and explained to students regularly.

Can I please ask you to make sure you read the uniform guidance below very closely, paying particular attention to the following:

**Shoes, not trainers:** Some students in the past have convinced their parents there is a degree of flexibility around black trainers and they have bought expensive Nike Air Force or similar. This is incorrect and will be robustly challenged.

**No Nose Studs:** Please do not allow your son or daughter to get a piercing at a time when they cannot remove it for school. One stud per ear is permitted, but no further piercings can be worn in school. If a student attends school with a piercing, they will be expected to remove it immediately. Any refusal will be seen as a defiant and sanctioned in line with the school behaviour policy.

**Plain black Tights only:** In this summer term, we offered the option to wear plain black socks. Since September, we have returned to our published policy of plain black tights only.

**Jewellery, make up and hair styles:** As part of our expectations, we have a clear policy around jewellery, make up and hair styles. Please continue to support the school in upholding our high values around this by discussing the following (taken from our school website) with your son or daughter.

One pair of small, plain earring studs may be worn and a watch may be worn. No nose studs, oral or facial piercings. If make-up is worn, it should be very discreet, otherwise students will be asked to remove it. No nail varnish other than neutral and nails should be an appropriate length for sport, Food Technology and other physical activities. Acrylic and gel nails should not be used if they cannot conform to our policy.

Hair should be neat and tidy and in a style that does not draw undue attention to the student. Hair dyes must be in natural appropriate colours with no two-tone hair. Subtle highlights are acceptable, provided they are in natural colours. No patterns/shaved areas cut into the hair. Hair accessories must be plain black or navy blue.

**Please do not commit to any expensive products late in a holiday which will need to be removed prior to returning to school. Any student refusing to follow this expectation will be seen as defiant and sanctioned accordingly.**

**Shirt, tie and blazer, worn correctly:** We expect our uniform to be worn with pride. We will be insisting students wear their shirt tucked in, with their tie an appropriate length and knotted at the top button.

I would be grateful if you supported us in ensuring any uniform purchased meets our published expectations, as we will continue to challenge students wearing anything different.

The link to uniform on the school website is: <https://www.grange.bucks.sch.uk/parents/school-uniform>

### **Boys Uniform**

Black jacket with Grange School badge

Pale blue shirt (Y7 – Y9) White Shirt (Y10 – Y11) from uniform suppliers or retail stores. Can be short or long sleeved. **No polo shirts.**

Black V-neck jumper (optional).

Grange School tie.

Black trousers (from uniform suppliers or approved styles from retail stores). **No jeans style or skinny style.**

Plain black socks.

Black shoes (See examples on the website). **No canvas shoes or trainers/leisure style shoes.**

Black or dark blue top coat. **No hooded sweat tops**

### **Girls Uniform**

Black jacket with Grange School badge. Pale blue shirt/blouse (from uniform suppliers or retail stores). Can be short or long sleeved. **No polo shirts.**

Black V-neck jumper (optional).

Grange School tie.

Blue check skirt or black trousers.

Black trousers (from uniform suppliers or approved styles from retail stores). **No jeans style or skinny style.**

Blue check skirt (only available from Price and Buckland uniform supplier).

Plain black tights

Black shoes – heels no higher than two inches (See examples). **No canvas shoes or trainers/leisure style shoes.**

Black or dark blue top coat. **No hooded sweat tops**

### **Alternative Muslim Girls Uniform Y7 – Y11**

Black jacket with Grange School badge.

Navy Shalwar Kameez with gold trim (only available from Price and Buckland uniform supplier).

Navy headscarf with Grange School logo (only available from Price and Buckland uniform supplier).

Long sleeved pale blue (years 7-9) or white (years 10-11) shirt/blouse (from uniform supplier or retail stores).

Grange School tie.

Black trousers (from uniform supplier or approved styles from retail stores). **No jeans style or skinny style.**

Plain black socks or plain black tights.

Black shoes – heels no higher than two inches (See examples). **No canvas shoes, trainers/leisure style shoes or high heels.**

Black or dark blue top coat. **No hooded sweat tops.**

**As we have done from September 2021, we will be sending students home to change who repeatedly challenge our uniform policy.** Please do all you can to help avoid this and ensure your son or daughter has the correct uniform or kit available and by reminding them of our expectations. If you have any issues around this, please contact me directly on [ngolding@grange.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:ngolding@grange.bucks.sch.uk)

### **PE Kit expectations**

All of our uniform and PE kit information is on our school website, but I have copied it here to ensure there are no misunderstandings.

White/black or plain white polo shirt with Grange School logo.

Black/white or plain black shorts with Grange School logo OR Black/white skort with Grange School logo.

Plain black football socks.

Appropriate Training shoes/boots as required.

#### **Optional Items**

¼ zip tracksuit top with Grange School logo.

Black sweatshirt with Grange School logo.

Black/white rugby shirt.

Black tracksuit bottoms.

Black dance tights.

Black or white base layer for underneath kit in cold weather.

Shin pads.

Gum shield.

### **Attendance and punctuality**

As a school, we continually strive to improve students' attendance and we are closely focusing on this to improve student achievement. Research shows that there is a direct link between attendance and achievement: the higher the attendance rate, the less risk there is of a student under achieving. If a child is not in class, then they are not learning and hence not making progress. We have a dedicated team of staff in our attendance office to not only monitor, but support attendance in school. If you are finding it difficult to motivate your son or daughter to attend each day on time, please do get in touch with them for help and advice.

## **Holidays during term time.**

Removing your children from school during term-time hinders their learning and places them at a distinct disadvantage in terms of both their education and in comparison with their peers opportunities and achievements. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school and they are expected to take holidays during official school holidays, which equates to approximately 90 days per year. Our Attendance Policy is a comprehensive document outlining our approach and can be found on our school website.

## **Time away from school for Religious Observance**

The Grange School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance (Code R). It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that **no more than one day** be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

## **What is good attendance?**

Our attendance expectations are clear, we want our students in school 100% of the time. We, like most schools, have a minimum school expectation of 97%, which the vast majority of our students achieve or better.

*Surely 90% attendance is good?*

90% attendance, or 10% absence, is considered by the Government as 'persistent absence'. Persistent absence is challenged, but also supported rigorously by the attendance team in school and by Buckinghamshire Council education welfare officers.

90% attendance will mean that ½ a day is missed every week. If a student has 90% attendance over a school year, then they will miss one month of school, that is over 100 lessons.

After 5 years at school (years 7 to 11) – it means that a student will **miss half a school year**, this directly impacts upon a student progression, achievement and ultimately life choices. Further research has found that for every 17 days of school lost per year, a student will drop, on average, a full GCSE grade.

## **Mobile Phones**

Our stance on mobile phone use in school has not changed, they are not to be seen or heard during the school day. This includes the inappropriate use of headphones and earpods. Sadly, we are seeing an increase in use during the school day, resulting in an increasing number of phones and headphones being confiscated. We are all keen to avoid this.

It is important our students have their phones for travelling to and from school, so I would appreciate it if you could reinforce the expectations about use in school. I would also like to thank those parents who have emailed me recently in support of the phone expectations and support when the phone is taken from their children until the end of the day or end of the week for repeat issues.

## **Electric Scooters**

We have seen an increase in the use of electric scooters and bikes in and around Aylesbury recently, the trial with the yellow scooters is still underway. A small number of Year 10 and Year 11 students had been using their own electric scooters to travel to and from school. Personally owned electric scooters are currently only legal to use on private land. Please see the information from Thames Valley Police in this link.

[https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/police-forces/thames-valley-police/areas/advice/e-scooters-what-are-the-rules/?fbclid=IwAR3rzP87C4zEsVCGvPDRL\\_cTM3YWpnajRIG7lcpSpxAngH3vdWkjnn3\\_j2A](https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/police-forces/thames-valley-police/areas/advice/e-scooters-what-are-the-rules/?fbclid=IwAR3rzP87C4zEsVCGvPDRL_cTM3YWpnajRIG7lcpSpxAngH3vdWkjnn3_j2A)

As a consequence, we cannot condone or support the use of any scooters being used as transport to or from school. If your son or daughter has been using an electric scooter, please find an alternative mode of transport. If electric scooters are brought into school, they will be confiscated and only returned to parent's or carers.

## **Cycle safety**

It is good to see an increasing number of students cycling to school. However, I am concerned about the safety of students on and off bicycles at the beginning and end of the day. As you know, there is severe congestion coupled with some unsafe driving outside school, so minimising the risk to all students is paramount. The vast majority of students cycle safely on well-maintained bicycles. I am concerned how few are wearing helmets, but also how some students are cycling in and out of the road wearing headphones. Naturally, erratic cycling is challenged by duty staff, but we are not confident that the rest of the journey home is as safe as it could be.

We have had serious accidents involving cyclists near to the school in the past, and I am keen to ensure we minimise the risk to all of our students. Please do all you can to reinforce the message to your son or daughter about staying safe on the roads. We have taken steps to ban some students from cycling who have persisted with unsafe cycling near the school, I sincerely hope not to have to do this with any other students.

## **Ongoing congestion at the front of school.**

In each letter I send, I ask all parents to arrange to pick up their children away from the front of the school. It is clear this is still not happening consistently and I continue to fear an accident is imminent. I have asked for the support of our local police officers in managing this better. If you have a pass to enter the school premises as children are leaving, please be prepared to show it upon entry. If you do not have a pass, please help us manage safe entry and exit for our students by not driving into the school car park when students are present. Also, please do not use the school entrance as a turning place, as this places our students in further jeopardy of a road traffic accident.

Despite the current concerns around increasing cases of COVID, I sincerely hope you and your family are not too affected in the coming days and weeks.

Yours faithfully



**Nick Golding**  
**Deputy Head Teacher**