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Monday 21 January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Late Buses Now Running

Late buses are now provided every day except Fridays, leaving our site at approximately 4:20pm. Students in all year groups are able to sign up in the normal way and we hope this will enable Year 11 and 13 students to attend all of our revision boosters and all other students to participate in our various after-school clubs.

The GAP – And We're Off ...

If you have a child in Year 11, how is their revision going and are they on top of their GAP activities? We hope so and welcome them to our after-school provision of work spaces and light refreshments. I must say that the quality of the revision material that has been specially created for your children this year is quite exceptional. Displays of the materials will be on display at our next Year 11 PTC and you will be thrilled and envious of the assistance given to young people today. The material is brilliant but as the old expression goes ...



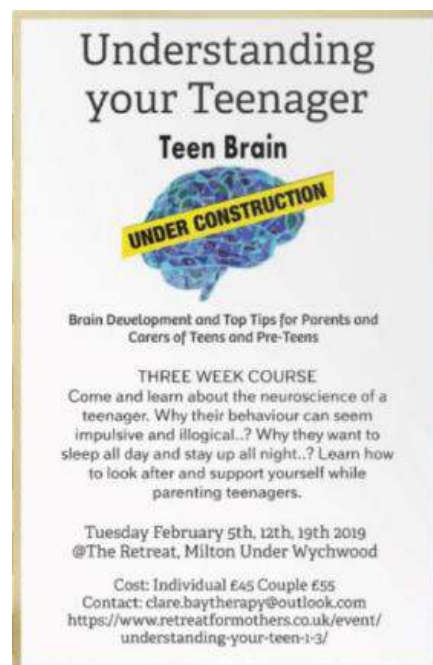
Last week we had to escort some students off the premises many hours after school had closed. Such students are inspiring and very wise.

Year 11 PTC – Thursday 24th January 2019

Later this week parents and carers of Year 11 students can find out how hard their children are working, how engaged they are in the GAP and how much progress can be achieved in the final five months of their secondary school education. This is the most important PTC of their school life and we hope to welcome a huge turnout from 4:45pm (till 7pm).

The Workings of a Teenage Brain

Whilst even the best eyes might not see much of this flier (right), I understand you will receive it through In-Touch. It is a highly recommended course for parents and carers and helps us understand why they are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, why their sleep patterns can be so odd and what parents and carers can do to help them through those years. There are three sessions, based in Milton-Under-Wychwood. Whilst there is a cost we will support any parents and carers who wish to attend.



Visit of Norwegian Teachers



On Friday 1st February we will be welcoming 19 teachers from the beautiful Norwegian city of Bergen. They are in the UK on a research project and we have agreed to host them for the day. They may be shadowing our teachers during period 3 on that day. Scandinavian education is often lauded and whilst we shall fulfil our side of the bargain to talk about education in the UK, we look forward to hearing their take on why their education system is often praised.

Open Door Coming Soon

Currently we have very limited space for your children to eat their lunch and socialise at break and lunchtime. During warmer or dry weather the situation is easier because of the vast outdoor spaces. However, during these colder months we have to find new ways to guarantee that your son or daughter has a calm, warm and comfortable place to eat and socialise (or catch up on homework). Some students have managed to persuade a teacher to let them use their room but the majority do not have a designated room and can be seen eating their lunch whilst standing or walking the corridors.



This is why we have been asking your children who they would like to be with at break and lunchtime. We will then assign them a room of their own and they can stay in that room as long as they keep it clean and tidy. Every so often we will give students the chance to change their allocated rooms / groups because we know that friendship groups can shift as quickly as chips on a Friday.

This means that if you have a child in Years 9, 10 or 11, they can either use their Open Door Room, or go outside. There will be several spaces that are not assigned (the bays) and can continue to be freely used, as long as they do not become over-crowded. The library will remain open to all students in exactly the same way as it has in the past.

We are also busy looking at some long term solutions to create additional spaces but in the meantime we hope this new approach will be a significant improvement and we'll see how it goes during an eight week trial.

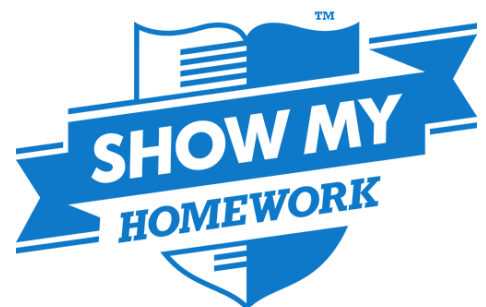
None of the above applies to Years 7, 8 or Sixth Form. Years 7 and 8 have the Main Hall for their break and lunch, whilst the Sixth Form have their common areas.

Homework

Mr Gent has been taking us all through some reminders about homework. There is [plenty of research out there](#) on what makes good and bad homework and we know that it is valuable and enables students to make progress:

1. When it is focused upon a particular element of learning.
2. When it is an integral part of the learning that is happening in class.
3. When high-quality feedback is given on the work that is produced.
4. When there is no more than one to two hours of homework completed a day.
5. Where there is dialogue between parents and teachers about homework.

Please be assured that statements 1 to 4 are our focus here, but we want to make number 5 much more powerful and therefore effective. The old homework diaries used to have a function in this regard but I can't recall them ever being particularly well used to do much more than exchange notes, concerns or a complaint. We want dialogue and instant communication before problems become mini-crises.



But now we have the Show My Homework app. We ask that you install this app on your phone so that you may receive notifications every time a homework has been set and when it has been completed (or not). The app also gives you a chance to message the teacher to query a task or indeed let us know when a task was particularly enjoyable or valuable.

Below is a quick summary of how many parents and carers have logged in to look at and monitor their child's homework on *Show My Homework* (SMHW):

Year 7: Every parent / carer has logged into SMHW at some point.
Year 8: Almost every parent / carer has logged into SMHW at some point.
Year 9: 102 parents / carers do not yet have a log-in.
Year 10: 101 parents / carers do not yet have a log-in.
Year 11: 38 parents / carers do not yet have a log-in.

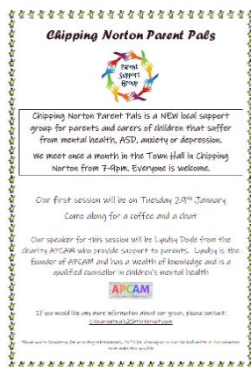
If you could do one thing this week that will help with your child's education, then this week we ask that you download the Show My Homework app and use your unique pin code – available from your child's tutor. Please contact Mr Gent if you would like any further information: dgent@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk.

Coming Soon ... Uniform Consultation

In my next letter to parents and carers I will share our proposals for changes to the school uniform from next September. Before this begins, it is worth being very clear that under no circumstances will you be required to replace perfectly usable uniform.

Coming Soon ... New School Badge

One of the reasons why our uniform will change is because our school badge is being updated. I hope that my next letter will 'reveal' the new school badge and stationery. We have sought a new badge or crest that captures traditional symbols that relate to our famous bell tower and also our four houses. But also symbols that capture the focus of education today and in our school in particular – the acquisition of knowledge to fuel every young person's imagination and creativity. The big reveal will take place shortly and we hope will be met with your approval!



Chipping Norton Parent Pals

This week, also please be on the lookout for this flier via In Touch. It's reaching out to parents and carers of children that suffer from mental health issues, ASD, anxiety or depression. More details are of course on the flier but I could not recommend this enough and welcome the fact that this community looks out so much for one another.

Yours sincerely

Barry Doherty,
Headteacher