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Dear Parents and Carers

PTA Christmas Fayre

Another super PTA event took place on Friday afternoon. The fayre attracted many visitors to our Main Hall and almost as many left with bags containing Christmas gifts, decorations and prizes. Many, many thanks to the PTA for their commitment and energy!

Sixth Form Well-Being Day

Also on Friday, our sixth formers seemed to really enjoy the range of activities and visiting speakers we arranged for them during the course of that day. Sixth formers are very aware of the opportunities and adventures that await them in the next stage of their lives; but also have a growing awareness of how difficult it might be to navigate through the next few years. In planning the day, Mrs de Bruyn and Mrs Davison were motivated by the need to design the day around our sixth formers' requests and their needs. Thank you to the sixth formers and the team for making Friday such a success.



Sporting Heroes

We are very proud to share some news on some sporting achievements amongst our students. Just over a week ago Sophie, Katie, Ella and Kiera represented Chipping Norton School at the Southern Region Schools Trampolining Championship. In our first appearance at the competition, the girls came second overall (beating Didcot Girls into third) and will now compete at the national event in January. Their plaque will be on display in our foyer and we wish them every success in a few weeks' time.



Meanwhile, our Rugby U18s faced a very strong Burford School team in the district final several weeks ago and we felt desperately unfortunate to narrowly lose. Nevertheless, their previous victories presented another opportunity to claim the local bragging rights, but this time in the



Oxfordshire County Final. Both teams were exceptional but our U18s triumphed 20-19 in a very tough encounter that left them and us very proud indeed. More on this game in the end-of-term newsletter.

It's time to talk about behaviour ... Part 2 of 3

Last week I tried to summarise some of the concepts we tend to wrestle with when we address behaviour issues in schools. I referred to the more recent focus on behaviours that lent themselves to good learning and how this changed what classrooms felt and sounded like in the past 20 years. I also mentioned the subjective nature of what is deemed good or bad behaviour and emphasised the need for a clear agreement on what constitutes great character. Plus the importance of finding sanctions and rewards that deter *and* motivate. This week, my focus is on current behaviours at CNS.

The norms at CNS

14 weeks in, I am beginning to recognise some of the norms at CNS. Every school has its own set of 'norms' that it is used to and accepts as the usual way of things. Visitors and newcomers can offer a valuable new perspective on those routines and then challenge us to think and act differently in the future. So, what is behaviour like at CNS and what are the norms? Is it better than other schools and should it be better?

Stones in the shoe

Behaviour at CNS is pretty good! It is certainly very good compared to many or even most schools, but it's not as good as it could be, or needs to be, to ensure we become a truly great school. I do see some stones in the shoe; tiny issues that can cause an irritating impact on learning and lessons. This includes some lateness to lessons and low level disruption (talking/whispering, slow to unpack, not listening to instructions), all of which slow down the pace of learning and causes all other children's learning to be affected. There is often a silent majority who report feeling frustrated by others' lack of respect for their learning.

Even better if ...

Students in all schools can underestimate the impact of low level disruption on others. Addressing silly behaviour might absorb five minutes from a lesson – over the course of a year this is almost 5,000 minutes; that's 400 hours by the end of Year 11. Yes, it stacks up and therefore erodes life-chances.

Challenging behaviours

More seriously, we do encounter challenging behaviours and this usually leads to more serious sanctions than detentions. This involves more contact with parents and carers as we try to understand how the mistake occurred and how to avoid it happening again. We are driven by the belief that every mistake is an opportunity to learn and improve. For example, a child that has bullied another must not simply focus on their sanction, but instead confront the question of why they treated another person so badly. Often, it is only in retrospect that children realise what they did was wrong, and only feel that regret or remorse when it's too late.

You may have encountered [a story from the USA](#) of how one parent decided to punish their daughter for bullying a classmate. It raises many questions about how we respond to serious misbehaviour and the best way to discourage our children from making poor choices. [See what you think...](#)

Much of the serious misbehaviour we deal with takes a great deal of time to resolve because it's not immediately obvious to that child (and sometimes the family) that they have done something wrong. Highly anxious, angry or frightened young people do or say things in the heat of the moment and may need some time before they can reflect rationally and calmly.

What are we like when no one is watching?

However, behaviours that are clear-cut and understood by *everyone* to be 'wrong' or 'bad', like theft, graffiti or violence, are very uncommon at CNS. Whenever or wherever our students are supervised and reminded, they tend to behave impeccably. This slips when we are not closely monitoring or watching and when we are not going to catch them. *Sound familiar?* This explains things like litter-dropping or silliness on some buses. But young

people have to learn to regulate their own behaviour and choices and not rely on adults to keep them on the right path.

On the other hand, attendance and punctuality to school is very good and improving. Broadly speaking, I see so much good humour and good nature between students in the lunch queues, on the buses or wandering around at lunchtime. Almost all students are very willing to learn, keen to be very successful and respond enthusiastically to a well-planned lesson or an exciting topic. These are not always norms in other schools, but they are at CNS.

It is obvious that almost all of our students want to be successful. I know with my own Year 9 History class that it will be the quality of my teaching that will make the difference for those students because there is a broad willingness to learn, work hard and be successful. This isn't true in every school and it's the thing I love most about students at CNS – they want to learn. That's not to say we don't see some laziness or failure to complete homework at times, but we do experience really nice young people, happy to be here and willing to give things a go. We're very lucky to have the students and staff we have and the combination often results in magic.

Getting involved

CNS cannot be seen as single school. It is seen and experienced in different ways by different children and their families. Some children get really involved in all their lessons, are part of teams, performed in the *Joseph* production, helped out at Open Evening, fill Christmas gift-boxes *and* become learning mentors. But this is not the case for all children at all times.

The challenge is findings lots of things to do in schools that engage and motivate all types of learners and young people and enable them to find the thing they love or are inspired by for the rest of their lives.

Gift Box Appeal

One final reminder about the gift box appeal. All boxes will be filled and collected on Monday 17th December during registration. Please consider encouraging your son or daughter to participate and support this local charity by filling their own gift box.



What could you give?

Approximately £5 worth of...

- ✓ Gloves / scarf
- ✓ Warm socks
- ✓ Sweets / chocolates
- ✓ Brush / comb
- ✓ Toothbrush and paste
- ✓ Notebook and pen
- ✓ Fidget toy or similar
- ✓ Mini torch

- ✗ Sharp objects
- ✗ Perishable items
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Expensive items

Final Day of Term Arrangements

As most parents and carers will already know, the autumn term ends slightly early on the last day. We plan to finish school at 12:25pm and all of the normal bus services will be provided. Our whole school assembly will be taking place shortly beforehand and therefore the precise time your children will leave school may vary *slightly* so that we exit calmly and safely.

Yours sincerely

Barry Doherty,
Headteacher