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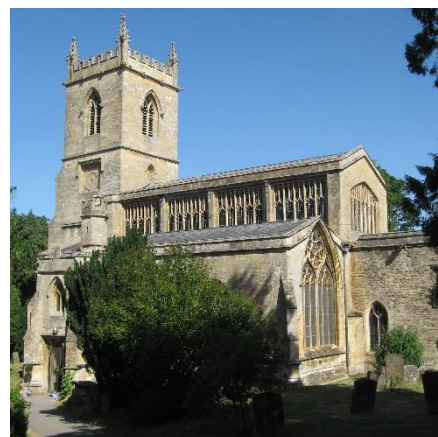


17 December 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

### ***Annual Carol Service at St. Mary's Church***

From 7pm on Tuesday 18th December, Mr Brown will be leading our choir for the annual carol service in the beautiful setting of St. Mary's Church. There will be a couple of audience participation items, including *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Concert Band, Flute Group, Brass Ensemble, Choir and several soloists are taking part, performing some well-known Christmas pop classics, as well as the more traditional carols.



### ***Gift Box Appeal***

Thank you to those families who encouraged or supported their children to participate in the gift box appeal. The gift boxes were collected today and are now with the Aspire team in Oxford, ready for distribution. Your kindness and generosity will be greatly appreciated.

### ***1st Annual Student Conference***



The Student Council and a number of additional volunteers will be taking part in our first annual conference on Wednesday. The title is "Building Character".

If your son or daughter is participating, they will not be expected to wear normal school uniform and breakfast / lunch will be provided.

By the end of the day we will have made significant progress on the direction of our four

houses, ideas for rewards and recognition and the first steps completed towards the introduction of character education from September 2019.

### ***Final Day of Term Arrangements***

Just a reminder that school will finish at approximately 12:25pm, with buses leaving 10-15 minutes later. Do let us know if you have any difficulties collecting your children at this earlier time. If you are running a little late on the day, we shall be here until the normal



time to look after your son or daughter. They will be able to wait in the Main Reception until you arrive.

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

In the first two parts of this segment I tried to explore some of the principles around how we perceive and manage behaviour in schools, and then moved on to standards of behaviour at CNS right now. I acknowledged that whilst behaviour at CNS remains very good, it could be better. This week my focus is on the future.

Since our behaviour is usually [a learned response to the world around us](#), we shall work even harder on *educating* students in how to behave. This will involve generating **greater awareness of what is and is not acceptable in our school** and the impact that poor behaviour has on their own and others' life chances. This will be coupled with a greater emphasis on and awareness of the character that we seek at CNS and why this is important. In short we shall more **clearly define our school ethos and values** and ensure they are more visual, lived and reinforced in every class and corridor, every day, with every student.

We shall also review how we **reward and recognise students**; acknowledging that the way young people prefer to receive praise changes over time and can be a deeply personal choice. Nevertheless, we wish to loudly and publically praise those young people who are flourishing and being role models to others. It is important that young people can relate to successful individuals and realise that success is within everyone's reach.

The way we report on **your child's personal development** will also be reviewed. Whilst parents and carers do receive information on their children's progress and attitudes to learning, we do not yet explore an evaluation of how each child's personal development is progressing – an evaluation that is free of academic assessments. We may **introduce a personal development report** that sets out the behaviours we seek in all our students and consider simple things like attendance, punctuality, house points and behaviour points, but also their interest in reading, participation in clubs and activities, the degree to which they volunteer or help out in their community, or which campaigns or lobbying they are engaged in over time. Alongside data on your children's progress, an insight into how well their personal development is progressing is equally, if not more, important.

The way we issue **detentions will also be reviewed**. A clearer distinction between behaviours that damage oneself and behaviours that damage others will emerge and appropriate responses to each type will be reconsidered. However, the single biggest improvement we know we need to address is **low-level misbehaviour in lessons**. This is a type of misbehaviour that slowly erodes and causes the vast majority to be frustrated by the choices of a few. An improvement in this particular area is the most pressing of all and will be a significant focus in the New Year.

Finally, we do and will always recognise that **managing one's behaviour is much harder for some than others**. This is not an excuse; this is a compassionate reality. Distinguishing how we identify and manage highly anxious students will be a priority, with us all accepting that a **one size fits all behaviour policy is neither credible nor humane**.

By building on and strengthening parents' and carers' trust in our motives and approaches, we will [raise everyone's expectations](#) and raise the standard of behaviour, conduct and character amongst all students at all times. **Raising expectations** is a risky business and not always for the faint-hearted because those two fancy words have to translate into all of us, adults *and* students, raising our game simultaneously and in exactly the same direction.

Just like the GAP, each one of us has to embrace the fact that **our futures are defined by the decisions we make today** and that we have a high degree of control over those decisions. Being the best version of me that I can be, has to continue to be our mantra.

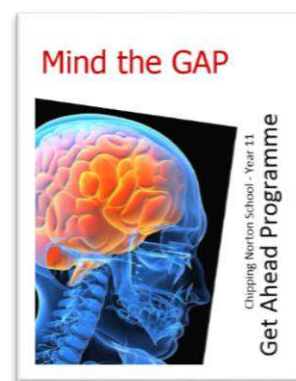
Every week, my colleagues and I seek to capitalise on new and clearer understandings of how teenage brains, minds, thoughts and feelings interact. Last week we looked at [this Ted Talk](#) and I invite you to do



the same: it is perfectly pitched to capture that need to be both **compassionate and demanding** with young people.

### ***The Get Ahead Programme***

Next year will of course be a demanding year for our Year 11s and Year 13s. The challenge for all students is how to combat the need to revise for all of their subjects and all of those examinations. Ineffective and late revision tends to cause all sorts of problems, not least students feeling overwhelmed and even less likely to revise and be the best they can be. However, a new remedy is on its way... Starting in January, we shall begin the Get Ahead Programme for Year 11 students. I will set out what it is shortly, but wish to begin by clarifying why we've created this new approach to revision at Chipping Norton School.



### ***GAP: What + How***

We recognise that the most difficult skill to master in every subject is *how* to revise. We also know that teenagers are the least likely age group to effectively manage their time and are often the most likely to put things off and reassure themselves that there's enough time left to sort everything out. After all, with the cold wind blowing in December, the examinations in May and June do seem an awfully long way away. However, as they approach those examinations niggles can often turn into angsts that there's so much work and so little time to do it. This can spur some into action, but it can also overwhelm the best of them and either discourage them further or make them feel like giving up. The solution to all of this is based on the mantra – *the earlier the better*.

### ***GAP: The race against yourself – not others***

The Get Ahead Programme, or GAP, does what it says on the tin. It is acknowledging that there is a bit of a race taking place with a finishing line sometime in June. However, it's not like an ordinary race ...

- Unlike most races there is no starting pistol; it begins whenever a student chooses to begin the race to that finishing line. Our new GAP is designed to enable all of our Year 11 students to **begin their race nice and early** – as soon as we return in January.
- Unlike all other races, students are not racing against one another – they are racing against themselves. We are encouraging them to consider alternative futures and ask whether they wish to be the version of themselves that kicks-off early and wins – or the version of themselves that delays and comes second or third. It is so important that young people understand that their future is not fixed and that it is determined by the decisions they make every single day.



### ***GAP: The Details***

From January, ordinary homework will cease to exist in Year 11. Instead all students will be set very structured weekly revision activities. It will be very clear **what** needs to be revised and **how** it ought to be revised. The 'what' and the 'how' are equally important.

When the Year 11s return they will discover their revision activities for all subjects leading up to the first half-term in February. Unlike in almost every other school in the past, our revision programme will not be invitational. It must be completed and we shall be monitoring its completion very carefully so that your children do not fall behind and instead start slowly and build up their momentum and stamina in time for those examinations.

By Easter, we anticipate that every student will have completed *at least* 14 hours of revision in every subject. Back in the 80s, I don't recall revision being mentioned until at least April!



### ***GAP: Family / Student / School Partnership in Action***

If you are a Year 11 parent or carer reading this, then please do not relax *too much*. The GAP is not perfect. It will rely on my colleagues setting structured revision activities (with the 'what' and 'how' clear) that are carefully monitored. It will rely on the students to do those revision tasks. But ***it will also rely on parents and carers to encourage, motivate and also demand completion*** so that their children be the best version of themselves and not the silver or bronze version. If we all do our bit, then we can make a massive difference for every student.

### ***GAP: Also new for Year 11s***

In order to go one step further and encourage wider participation and buy-in, we shall be introducing several further measures:

1. Every evening a comfortable Revision Café will open until 4:30pm every night. We shall provide free revision materials (flashcards / highlighters / sticky notes) and drop in to see how they are getting on and encourage students to encourage one another.
2. We shall be extending the late bus service so that late busses will run every day except Friday, leaving at 4:25pm. There is a bus for the northern and southern villages, with the final drop off approximately 40-45 minutes later. A perfect amount of time to flick through those newly created flashcards. **Younger students will of course be able to use those late buses as well – perhaps encouraging even greater membership of various clubs and activities.**

### ***GAP: Three Weeks To Go***

The Year 11s have done their examination rehearsals and experienced a 'mock results day' on Friday. They were encouraged to imagine what their real results day will look like in August and embrace the fact that **futures are elastic, nothing is certain** and that one grade improvement is typical, but two or even three grade improvement can sometimes be relatively straightforward when a student embraces an early and thorough revision programme.

### ***GAP: Ideal Stocking Fillers***

I can barely force myself to type this but why not make a very special stocking for your children this Christmas? Various quality revision cards (spiral, loose, wallets, boxes) can be found easily on-line and points to a global awareness amongst students of the best way to revise. Surely, everyone loves new stationery? These two YouTube video (try [this one](#) and also [this one](#)) will give parents and carers unfamiliar with the ideas behind flashcards some insight.



### ***And what about the Sixth Form?***

Unlike the Year 11s, the Year 13s have their examination rehearsals after the Christmas holiday. Just like Year 11, we shall be sharing ways in which their revision programmes and support networks will be reviewed and enhanced to enable each student to feel academically and emotionally more confident in the run-up to their examinations.

### ***And finally...***

On behalf of my colleagues and the Governing Body, we wish all children and their families a very happy, special and safe Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Barry Doherty, Headteacher

