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5 November 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Remembrance Week



As we approach the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of 1918 we have several activities planned to secure space and time for us all to reflect on the victims of conflict through history. This will include a period of two minutes' silence on Friday at 11am, ahead of the particularly poignant national commemoration at The Cenotaph on Sunday morning.

Year 11 Rehearsals

The Year 11 rehearsal examinations are now underway and we hope that your children are rewarded with success and encouragement from the experience. We also know that examinations (rehearsals or the real thing) can be an extremely stressful time for young people. We might all display that stress in a range of ways from burning the candle at both ends or simply avoiding the need to prepare altogether. Striking that balance at all times is a skill in itself that can be more challenging than any GCSE. Our advice is as follows:

1. Agree and stick to a reasonable time to invest in revision each evening or at the weekends. Working for longer than 45 minutes at any one time is unlikely to be of value and our brains require lots of water, rest and distraction to be successful.
2. Build in mini-rewards (e.g. an episode of favourite TV programme?) and end of rehearsal bigger reward (e.g. favourite dinner and film night?) to create the sense of milestones and finality.
3. Praise and reward students' effort and not their grades.
4. Be clear on what needs to be revised – we don't expect the students to revise 'everything' for their rehearsals. *Contact the teacher if they or you are unclear.*
5. Focus on the things that are not sticking or they are struggling to understand.
6. If it feels too much and it's affecting sleep, diet and emotions then talk to someone at CNS right away. There may be things we can do to make the experience less demanding. Knowing that we know and that we care can be the first and most important step of all.

Please note that throughout the Year 11 rehearsals, the timing of our lunchtime will be amended. Lunch will take place *between* periods 3 and 4 during the coming weeks.

Celebration Assemblies

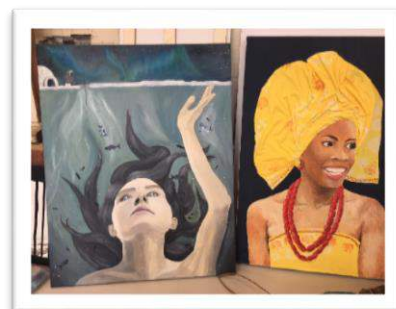
Last week, two members of each tutor group were nominated by their Tutors to receive certificates to recognise their effort since the start of the new academic year. I am not sure the oldest students relished the chance to arise and receive their certificate and firm handshake, but I hope they all valued our desire to catch them being great and thank them for being such great role models around the school.



How we informally and formally celebrate success is something we'll look at this year and consider changes in 2019/20. We know that younger students are generally more comfortable with public celebration but less so amongst our older students.

Meanwhile, we also know that it can be the most innocuous of praise that means the world to us. For some, a gentle knowing nod or a broad smile when returning fabulous work is more than enough. Celebrating achievements is important, but it is your children's effort that matters most and this will continue to be the characteristic we value most amongst young people.

Earlier this year you may recall those two paintings I discovered in Art near the start of term. You may well be seeing them again very soon because we have professionally photographed both works of art and they are now used in our latest batch of praise postcards.



Attendance Matters

Congratulations to those students who have maintained 100% attendance so far this year. Certificates will be awarded next week and well done to the many hundreds who have made a perfect start. Long may it continue!

Amazing Local Organisations: THRIVE and Aspire

There have been many things about the school and the local community that have hugely impressed me but perhaps there is nothing that has stood more than anything else. Many amongst you will be aware of a local charity called 'Thrive'. They exist to provide support for so many families and individuals who for one reason or another need some help to get through a difficult time. In the past they have provided food cards for local supermarkets, vouchers to buy winter coats, supplies for a primary school breakfast club or funding for mindfulness sessions, for example. The charity, its patrons, organisers and donors are wonderful people. Please take a look at [their website](#) and some of their [forthcoming events](#).



This week I am looking forward to meeting a representative from Aspire. [Aspire](#) do many wonderful things that include enabling long-term unemployed people to secure sustainable careers. Or tackling the often unseen problem of homeless. Following that meeting my hope is to find ways for

our students to learn more about this charity so that they may become even more aware of issues in our community and seeks way to help and support others.

Charities such as THRIVE and Aspire may, at some point early next year, become 'adopted' by our four houses as one of their local charities to support through fundraising and more general raising of awareness.

Purchasing Uniform

Hopefully you are now aware that the on-site school shop has closed. This means that all branded items are now available on-line. We do, however, have some spare stock, particularly PE items, and so do email us or call to find out what is available.

Several parents and carers have asked about purchases for next year. In the next few months we will have an updated school badge and this will naturally appear on future items of school uniform. As I've mentioned before, all current uniform will always be acceptable and therefore families will not be expected to replace perfectly good clothing such as clip-on ties, blazers or sports jerseys. There will be more information in due course, particularly from Mr Thomas in relation to PE kits from September 2019. Throughout, our goal is to drive down costs and continue to provide attractive and robust items that are value for money.

Out and About In Lessons

During one of my focussed learning walks last week I spent time with Mrs de Bruyn in Sixth Form Lessons. We were reminded of how well organised sixth form students must be at all times and saw some excellent examples of well-organised notes (see top right) that always ease future assessments and revision.

A group of A-level Art students were working quietly and independently on a range of work and, yet again, I was struck by the sheer originality and technical skills of our students (see right). And also their modesty!

Their interest in a wide range of artists, media and processes was strongly evident but, more than anything, they appeared to be working hard because they loved what they were doing and not because they were asked to do it: Educational Nirvana.

The individual who stood out was working in Year 13 in a Design & Technology lesson. We found him using a craft-knife to cut complex shapes from cardboard as part of a concept he was developing. He has secured a commission from Formula Renault to produce something for their brand new reception area.

He is at the early stages of two concepts: a rotating display case and a complex model of a Formula Renault car based on a series of linear 'slices' or two-dimensional sections that, when connected together, create a three-dimensional object that reveals the outer and inner working of the car. I am not entirely sure I've explained that well enough - but that's the gist anyway!

What impressed us most was the complexity of his designs and testing. The way he was thinking was truly creative in that he was applying his complex knowledge to a problem and then an elegant solution. It was clear that he was at the very early stages of his design but he was completely confident that whatever direction his final work took him in, he would deliver an outcome that would make his client and himself proud.

Seeing that confidence and love of learning was great and again a reminder of where the *relatively* simpler work in D&T in Year 7 takes students who have that passion and interest.

I hope the images provide a glimpse into his work and the quality that exists in our sixth form.

Yours sincerely



Barry Doherty,
Headteacher

