

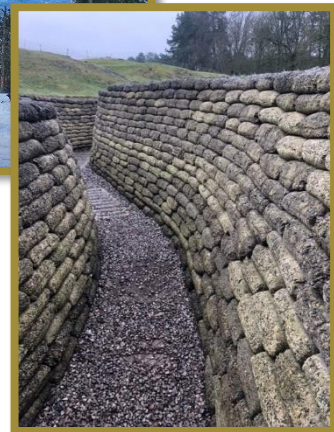


Monday 4th March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

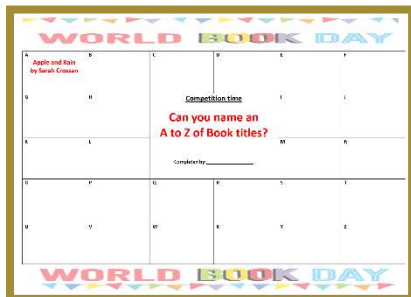
European Visits

It's been a busy time in Europe these past few days and by that I am not referring to Brexit. Over half-term Mr Johnson, Mrs du Crôs and Mr Hopkins led another successful ski trip; this time to Zell-am-See in Austria. They enjoyed it so much they are already planning a follow up in Italy next year.



Returning yesterday, Mr Baker, Mrs Walker, Ms Corley and Mr Shadbolt also led the First World War Battlefields tour which enabled even more CNS students to visit and experience life-changing places. My thanks to those colleagues for organising and supervising these complex visits.

World Book Day (and Week) – Thursday 7 March 2019



Throughout the week we shall be joining other schools and organisations to promote the joy and value of reading through a series of competitions (like the tutor group quiz on the left) and events on Thursday itself.

A pre-loved book sale, vouchers for subsidised new books and some DEAR time (drop everything and read) during period 2 on Thursday will celebrate the often untapped or forgotten pleasure of a great book.

New Catering Service Begins



Our new partnership with *Caterlink* began last Monday and students have already seen some changes in relation to the menu choices and service. Representatives from *Caterlink* are working in large numbers to ensure the transition is really successful and during this time we strongly encourage all students to talk to them about their views on everything from taste and quality to price and service.

Caterlink have many more changes planned in the longer term but one week in we hope your children are noticing some welcome differences, but also the maintenance of some old favourites like chips on Fridays!

I spent some time with Nigel Jolliffe, *Caterlink's* Development Chef, to talk about their plans and gather his initial impressions. He was so impressed with our students, describing them as amongst the best he had ever met. "You guys are very lucky here!" were his words and as you can imagine that is a really great compliment to hear (and pass on) from someone who sees an awful lot of students in many schools in his national role.

Uniform Consultation – Ends on Friday 8th March 2019

Again, thank you for the responses so far. In my next letter to parents and carers I shall try and summarise the responses and the final recommendations that will go before the Governing Body of this school. I am very determined that you are able to express your views on all aspects of our life at CNS and really welcome gaining a stronger sense of the things that matter most and least to families. One thing that has become very clear is that many parents and carers simply want very high quality garments that will last and represent good value for money.

In order to help us I therefore **invite any parents or carers to visit our school between 2pm and 4pm on Tuesday 12th March 2019**. During that time we have asked our on-line suppliers, *Price & Buckland*, to provide samples of garments so that students and families are able to give us some feedback.

I have been really impressed with *Price & Buckland's* desire to get it right for us all and work closely with us all to make some really smart decisions. If you would like to join us between 2pm and 4pm on that day, then please email office@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk by Friday 8th March so that we can select a suitably-sized venue.

Please continue to submit any final comments to the same email address by this coming Friday.

The Big Conversation

As I outlined in a previous letter, we are now nearing the end of a long conversation with all students on a whole range of topics: uniform, rewards, reports, facilities, character, homework and the four houses. On Thursday, representatives from all tutor groups are invited to a special Student Council meeting led by Mrs Thomas. We shall listen to, collect and collate the range of ideas. It will be impossible to please everyone all of the time, but it is our way of doing what we can to remain in touch with how the vast majority of students feel and what they desire in our school.

Students' views will not only impact on any updated uniform and appearance policies, but also policies that relate to rewards, recognition, celebration, sanctions, homework and the house system.

We really value the importance and potential of the Student Council in enabling really high levels of communication and understanding between students and adults. December's Annual Conference was the first major change and combined with the Spring Term's Big Conversation, we are trying to make sure that all voices are heard.

By way of recognition for their hard work and their importance, Mrs Thomas is currently organising a visit for the entire Student Council to the Palace of Westminster (and The London Eye) in mid-May. Invitations will be issued this week.



Raising Expectations

At CNS it is normal to work hard, be ambitious and show great care and kindness to others. During a recent peer review by colleagues from the *River Learning Trust*, the behaviour, attitudes and engagement of our students was very widely praised and we felt very, very proud of your children and our colleagues. It's great when visitors leave feeling deep admiration for the children and staff.

Job done then? Of course not, CNS has all of the foundations to become an amazing school and we are not interested in simply being good enough. In terms of teaching and learning, or tutoring and pastoral care, we wish to be much more than 'good enough' and instead become local and then national leaders in excellence. Across our school there is a restless desire to be better tomorrow than we are today.

This is particularly true of students' behaviour and engagement. It is not (yet) true that *all* students are well behaved at *all* times – but this is possible and it's our goal. Every school has a degree of misbehaviour and disengagement but the risks grow when a school gets into a habit of accepting those levels as the permanent normal for their school.

At all times we seek *new* and *better* norms; norms that better reflect what we can be and norms that will enable us to be better than we are today. Going forward we wish to concentrate our energy and effort on reducing and then eradicating three stones in our shoe:

1. The use of inappropriate language by students in general conversation or towards others.
2. The need to remove children from classrooms as a result of persistently disruptive behaviour.
3. Students walking off from members of staff who are seeking to address their behaviour.

We believe that when we permanently remove these three stones from life at CNS *all* students and staff will benefit. It is a sad reality to note that the conduct of a *very* small number of students can have a big knock-on effect for others when teaching or learning is interrupted.

This Is An Issue For All Students

We would appreciate your support in talking about these things with your children and reminding them that our expectations of one another are growing each day and that good manners and respect between us all are not simply *encouraged*, they are *expected*.

Our ultimate goal is that all children are surrounded by truly great friends who discourage and intervene before it's too late. The impact of peer pressure on teenagers is immense but can be turned to their advantage when friends look out for one another and steer one another away from mistakes.

End of the Isolation Room

Up until half-term we used to operate an isolation room. This was used as an alternative to a fixed term exclusion – what we used to call a 'suspension' in the olden days. We have closed this room because we are dedicated to the principle that absence from ordinary lessons ought to be as rare as possible and should only occur as a last resort when a student's behaviour warrants such a course of action. Going forward, instead of a day in the isolation room, a student will now be supervised by the Leadership Team during registration, break and lunchtime for a period of approximately one week or longer, if necessary. Learning is everything.

Yours sincerely



Barry Doherty
Headteacher