



Monday 10 June 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Good luck and keep going...

It's worth beginning by acknowledging the pressure our Year 11 and Year 13 students are under right now – but the light at the end of the tunnel can be seen. It is clear that there are a number of very tired faces and it really helps when they can see the end in sight and summon that final burst of energy and enthusiasm to see them over the finish line.

Parents and carers are also under the cosh. We know how hard it is to balance gentle pressure with loving support. There is no doubt that every examination success provides another key that opens another door, but we also know that these examinations, whether GCSEs or A-levels, are not the defining moment in a person's life. Few of us can trace the course of our lives back to whether we got a D, a C or a B. Getting the balance right between taking it all seriously and yet seeing the bigger picture is as difficult a skill to master as any other.

Senior students selected

Just before half-term we selected our new team of senior students who will take over from one of the best groups we have ever known.

Our new team is a very representative cohort and will work closely with the Sixth Form and Leadership Teams to further improve our Sixth Form. We hope to share some exciting news on that front and will do so once everything has been confirmed.

Welcome and congratulations to Megan Kyte, Ronan Kennedy and Thomas Alarcon-Clarke (back row), and to Neve Lloyd, Megan Hayes and Shannon Gorham.



Uniform and appearance updates

New uniform items will become available in the weeks leading up to the end of term if and when you need to replace existing items. Thank you for supporting us in achieving a major improvement in appearance since half term. As we all know, uniform does not lead directly to higher grades – but that is not the sole purpose of any school.

Our school uniform celebrates our belonging to a like-minded community that is bonded by common values, aspirations and goals – to be the best we can be. We strongly believe that wearing a smart school uniform which fosters a sense of pride and belonging is essential to fulfilling both of these purposes for our students.

You will be aware that from September there will be no further lee-way given to students who wear the incorrect footwear to school. All black trainers are currently tolerated but in the coming weeks we shall be writing to every parent or carer of any student who is still wearing the wrong footwear. In doing so we hope that we shall return in September with little or no distractions from our core business – delivering and gaining a first-class education.

Rewards and recognition next year

You will be aware in previous newsletters that I have written about the need to develop the ways that we reward and recognise all students. Most schools struggle to overcome a feeling amongst some students that their attitude to learning or their contribution to the life of the school does not appear to be valued (or known) by the school. It is sad to imagine a really great student who may not stand out from the crowd feeling less appreciated than other students.

Some of this can be said of Chipping Norton School and this is why we look forward to making some changes next year. Those changes will result in the introduction of a personal scorecard to coincide with each report to parents. The scorecards will recognise and reward a wider range of your son or daughter's character and contribution and will be tied to more regular celebration assemblies that parents and carers will be encouraged to attend as well.

In addition to recognising the basics around attitudes to learning, attendance, punctuality, behaviour and appearance, we shall be introducing awards for commitment *and* achievement in every subject, publicly celebrating those who actively participate in school clubs and productions, those who contribute to their local community and creating an opportunity for families to discretely nominate their own children for something that we may not know about – but which demonstrates the true character lying behind each face.

Parent Teacher Consultations

Thank you to those parents and carers who contacted us regarding the PTCs.

- The general feedback included an overwhelming interest in setting up an on-line booking system. Therefore we shall aim to trial this in October at the first 'Meet the Tutor' event. This will make it easier for parents and carers to make bookings with other members of staff, for example the Head of Year, SENDCo or one of us on the Leadership Team.
- Furthermore, some parents and carers reported an uneven experience in terms of the information that was provided to them on those evenings. We shall work on that so that the time allocated is used very efficiently.
- Finally, many felt that the location was too cramped and therefore we shall look into dispersing the meetings around the school. We will survey your experiences on PTCs again next year, after each event, and do our very best to make that time as valuable as possible.

Yours sincerely



Barry Doherty
Headteacher