



Monday 9 September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

### *Welcome back to a brand new year*

It seems much longer than a week ago that we began to crank the school back up to full speed with the return of all staff and then students last week. It has been an incredibly smooth start to the year and our new Year 7s are clearly another superb group of students who are going to be really successful. The same is true of our new Year 12s who will be amongst the first to enjoy the benefits of a renovation programme I shall summarise below.

### *GCSE and A-level Success*

I hope that you spotted and read the [press releases](#) that followed both the [A-level](#) and the [GCSE](#) results in August. They remain on our website for information and set out in detail why we continue to be so proud of our students and share their excitement about the opportunities great examination results now bring. Congratulations again to all of those students but also to the parents and carers who can also feel that those final years are a genuine test of endurance. Any examination success is always a combined reflection of the endeavours of the students, their families and my colleagues here at school.

However... time now moves on and our attention turns in full to the next generation of GCSE and A-level students whose examinations are just thirty weeks away. As their learning continues, so does ours at CNS. As you might imagine, every teacher and every Head of Department is currently analysing the latest 2019 data and identifying ways that can again improve the quality of education we seek to provide. We continue to ask demanding questions of ourselves and one another so that we go from strength to strength.

In my final major letter to you last year, I provided an insight into our major school improvement goals and this document [remains available](#) for you to study on our website.

### *Looking Ahead...*

As we all look forward, my own attention has become more focused on our new Year 11s and Year 13s. We have been studying the forecasted grades for these students that were provided by their teachers at the end of last year. Forecast grades in all schools are notoriously problematic but can provide us with a very broad sense of how well individual students are progressing towards the grades that they ought to be achieving.

And so, if you have a child in Year 11 or in Year 13 you can expect a letter from me in the next fortnight that sets out some tentative conclusions about that data for your child and also summarises some of the key messages for the coming year. We hope that all parents and carers of Year 11 students will be joining us on Thursday 19 September for the annual 'The Year Ahead' evening. More details on this will be sent directly to Year 11 families tomorrow.

In a number of cases I shall be inviting students and families to meet with me or a member of the Leadership Team in October – but only if the first updated set of data for this academic year remains concerning. Most students return in Year 11 and Year 13 with a renewed sense of determination and therefore success; but if we cannot detect either, then we will get together and find ways to remedy that situation.

You will be aware that **on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October we have a “Meet The Tutors Evening”** between 5pm and 8pm. We hope that every single student is able to accompany their parents or carers to meet their tutor, but also book *additional* appointments with the Head of Year, pastoral staff or members of the Leadership Team as well.

More on this event in a few weeks’ time but for now please be assured that we have added this new opportunity to see how the year has begun for your child/children and establish ways to ensure it’s a superb year ahead.

### ***Sixth Form Development***

During the first week of the summer holidays we discovered that we had been successful in our application for additional funding to develop our school site. We had sought additional funding to create a new sixth form centre and install new facilities that would significantly enhance the lives of our oldest students.

Therefore, the single storey area to the left of the main entrance will be completely devoted to the sixth form and provide them with a library, silent study spaces, a large common room, their own ‘powder room’ and a kitchenette. With independent study becoming more and more important in terms of securing success in A-levels, we can be confident all students will always have a bright, modern, comfortable and uncrowded place to study – but also socialise at the right times.

As with any change we do have some problems to solve and one of these is ensuring our local lettings have alternative spaces to occupy instead. Some of the minor work has commenced but the work will begin in earnest today and the area will be inaccessible for several months whilst the work is completed. We look forward to officially opening the new space in January and I will provide more information about the project later this term and at the Sixth Form Open Evening (Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November) in particular.

Last week’s news of additional public services funding is of course exciting but right now we are very grateful to have been successful in being able to undertake a major phase of site development in an era of austerity.

### ***Standards***

I hope that your children told you about our start of term assemblies that set out our commitments to your children’s education and future, alongside our expectations to ensure that their one shot at education is never wasted. Last year [I wrote frankly about behaviour](#) and you will be aware that we will not accept anyone taking away another student’s chance to be educated and secure a bright future. Time at school and education are too precious. Please share our determination to maintain an impeccably focussed school at all times.

Meanwhile ... appearance: superb and thank you! What a great start that has allowed us all to focus on the core business of life at this school: teaching and learning.

Best wishes,



Barry Doherty  
Headteacher