

Monday 28 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Last Week's Letters from Mrs De Bruyn and Mrs Armistead

I hope you enjoyed last week's letter from our new assistant headteachers and that it allowed you to broaden your awareness of the many ways in which we strive to be an even better school this year and beyond. Both will bring greater capacity and reach for our leadership team and ensure we can achieve our school improvement goals (see below) this year.

From Open Evening to Virtual Open Evening

The traditional open evening will have to be reimaged this year as a result of the need to maintain safe bubbles and support social distancing. Instead of that normal open evening (scheduled for this coming Thursday), we shall instead host a virtual open evening between 7pm and 9pm on Thursday 8 October.

We are pretty excited about what we have got planned. Today, we have a film crew in school taking footage of our site and they are safely filming students and staff talking about their lives at CNS. This will lead to a promotional film that we shall 'première' on Thursday 8 October.

Starting at 7pm there will be streamed talks from a few of us either side of that film and then a question and answer session with members of the leadership team, Mrs Faulkner (Head of Year 7) and Mrs Smart (SENCo). Whether you have children starting in Year 7 or not, the evening will be easily accessible via our website or Facebook page on the night, and thereafter on our website.

Thursday 1 and Friday 2 October 2020

Our school calendar correctly indicates that we are due to finish early (12:25pm) on Thursday 1 October, followed by an INSET Day on Friday 2 October. Having given this a great deal of thought, we have decided to continue with the early closure even though we will not be preparing for the normal open evening on that day.

It has been a strong start to the term, but finding time to work within our teams has been extremely difficult and, therefore, there is a great deal we can and will do on those days.

Continued...

And so to be clear:

- **School will finish early on Thursday 1 October.** Classes will end after period 3 at 12:25pm. Buses will leave approximately 15 / 20 minutes later.
- **The school will be closed to all students on Friday 2 October** for

our second INSET Day of the year.

What on earth do we do on INSET Days?

Every In-Service Training Day has a different focus. Later this week we shall use Thursday afternoon to reflect on our own professional standards over the past twelve months. We do this in an open and frank climate so that we can all live out our core belief that *everyone* is a learner.

On Friday 2 October, our time will be spent looking at the year ahead so that every subject and every year group can agree plans to achieve our school improvement goals.

Such conversations, if they are to possess any depth or quality, require time and space to think, discuss, challenge and support one another - and we look forward to that opportunity.

Our School Improvement Goals for 2020/21

I have mentioned before that we are not content to survive the year and instead we expect to thrive! Below is a simplified list of our six core improvement goals that are linked to the improvement plans for each subject, year group and employee at the school.

1. Reopen our school safely and rapidly to restore the very best culture, practices and opportunities that we had reached in March 2020.
2. Ensure a culture of excellence as standard and reduce known in-school variation in the quality of teaching and learning.
3. Complete the embedding of a knowledge rich curriculum across years 7 to 13.
4. Outstanding A level attainment and progress in the summer of 2021.
5. Outstanding GCSE attainment and progress, with a particular focus on boys and high prior attaining students in the summer of 2021.
6. Improve the way we adapt our lessons so that we make even greater gains in the engagement and progress of lower prior attaining students and students with special educational needs.

With the Year 11 mocks about to commence, followed by the Year 13 mocks straight after half term, we are very much up and running again and focussing on ensuring those students realise the potential that has been so evident for many years.

Staying Safe in School

I do not wish to make my letters to you unnecessarily focussed on COVID-19 except to reiterate a few points when necessary:

- When a school has a confirmed case of COVID-19 then all of the school contacts have to remain at home for 14 days from the date that their symptoms were first noted. Contacts include 'close contacts (typically their close friends) and 'proximity contacts' (those that sat nearby in their lessons). Such decisions are standard across the country as all schools seek to balance caution with common sense.
- It appears that if a school has more than one positive case in a single bubble or year group then there is an increased risk that an entire year group will be sent home for the 14-day period. • Please help us by encouraging your children to step back from one another whenever they can.

We have had to remind students regularly to stop needlessly 'huddling' and instead spread out as much as possible - especially when they are outside. It is not that they feel invincible; it is because they usually just forget or think the crisis is over unless we remind or nag them! • Face

coverings must always be worn when we are not in classrooms. There have been absolutely no problems with this whatsoever (*thank you!*) but far too many students have arrived in school without a face covering and we have distributed over 350 in the past fortnight. We stocked up in anticipation but hope that you understand this is not sustainable and that all students must take personal responsibility for their own and others' safety by having at least two face coverings in their possession every single day.

- Washable face coverings ought to be treated like socks – used once and then put through the wash.



Purchasing Chromebooks

89 families recently took delivery of the first tranche of Chromebooks. Chromebooks may be taken into school by our oldest students (Years 10 to 13) but, typically, are not encouraged to do so amongst our younger students - unless agreed and approved with either the Head of Year or the SENCo.

We have had more interest from other families keen to purchase a device for their son or daughter.

The cost of the next tranche of devices is likely to be £225, but this will depend on the levels of interest and the precise model available at the time of ordering. Right now, we are looking at another Dell Chromebook 3100 with the following specifications:

- Intel Celeron N4020 (Dual Core, up to 2.8GHz, 4M Cache, 6W)
- 11.6" HD (1366 x 768)
- Anti-Glare
- Non-Touch, Camera & Microphone, WLAN Capable
- Non-Touch LCD Cover
- 4GB 2400MHz LPDDR4 Non-ECC
- 32GB eMMC Storage



If you wish to purchase a Chromebook outright then email our finance team on finance@chippingnortonschool.org to register your interest *by Monday 5 October 2020*. We understand that delivery will take 3-4 weeks noting that national and global demand for devices appears to be very high.

Chromebook Loans

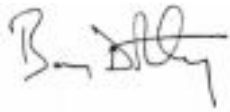
Meanwhile, we have a stock of brand new Chromebooks that we are able to loan to students, who are eligible for free school meals, throughout their time at CNS. We are prioritising those students who are due to take their GCSEs and A levels in the next few years and keeping a few back for short term loans to our younger students. Mrs Armistead (for Years 10 to 13) and Mrs De Bruyn (for Years 7 to 9) are leading on this programme and can be contacted directly if you have any queries about

this exciting additional provision that has already begun to roll out. This has formed part of our plan to close the so-called 'digital divide' and support students during these disrupted times in education.

And finally...

Thank you again for your contribution to ensuring your children have returned so positively. We constantly hear so many fantastic comments about our students and how their attitude, behaviour, organisation, work rate and flexibility have led to a widespread feeling that we are all enjoying a very sharp improvement in all round standards. Students are working harder in class, are less likely to submit substandard homework and incidents of serious misbehaviour are extremely rare indeed. Attendance is not yet back to where it needs to be but is climbing each week and this makes it more and more likely to lead to a marvellous year, against the odds.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Doherty', written in a cursive style.

Mr Doherty

Headteacher