



Thursday 10 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As we enter the final week of term, I am so proud of the way that your children and my colleagues have responded to the full resumption of school life since September. For most of us it has been pretty 'full on' since the release of the A level and then GCSE results seventeen weeks ago. Half term gave us some time to pause, reflect, plan and 'go again'. Since the start of November, we have seen attendance steadily climb, completed the two full rounds of mock examinations, and ensured that we continue to lead our students through their curriculum journeys.

And so this journey goes on but with the mist clearing and a huge sense of optimism for 2021. Seeing those images of Maggie Keenan in Coventry, on Tuesday, felt like the 'fight back' we have been waiting for and the moment that the education of all those involved in the vaccines came to fruition.



And this is why I feel particularly proud of the way that we are not limping into the Christmas break. Yes, we have had coughs and colds, and some positive cases, but we have all tried to thrive as best we can as much as possible.

Below is a taste of some of the events that will be taking place in our final week and demonstrates that commitment to one another.

The Santa Fun Run

Students have been contributing £1 to run five kilometres in their PE lessons in support of Katherine House Hospice. In 'return', students get a free Santa hat and also a memory of the time they did something kind *for someone they are unlikely to meet*.



£2257 raised
so far!



Homeless Appeal – Nobody Alone at Christmas Appeal

For the third year running, we are supporting Aspire by calling on students to donate a gift box or bag for a homeless person in Oxfordshire. The final day to donate a gift is tomorrow, Friday 11 December!

We collected over 100 in 2018, well over 200 in 2019 and hope to surpass 300 this year. Again, something *for someone we are unlikely to meet.*

Chipping Norton School Christmas Lights

Chipping Norton Christmas tree lights were switched on at the weekend. A number of our students and staff (plus one or two of their own children) volunteered to help dress the trees and herald in the start of Christmas in the town. It has been wonderful to see the Chipping Norton community come together *again*, this time through the Illuminate Chipping Norton project to ensure that Christmas cheer can still be experienced despite the pandemic.

The Illuminate Exhibition

Our A level Art students have completed their 'Illuminate Chipping Norton Exhibition'. The idea behind the project was to depict how people have reacted to the isolation of the coronavirus, but equally how people have found light in the darker moments. We would like to take this moment to thank Andrew Ogilvy and Ian Nolan for providing such a wonderful opportunity for our A level students - developing their digital photography skills and for the opportunity to create an exhibition from the idea to installation phase.



Trees for Schools

One of the Student Council's biggest projects of the year has been the tree-planting project. Mr Parker, working closely with Mrs De Bruyn and students from years 7, 8 and 9 have begun to transform the school's site and will create a beautiful and natural woodland that will take years to grow and will be enjoyed by the current and future inhabitants of this school for decades if not centuries.



So far, 128 students, families and teachers have sponsored a tree, raising £1637.85. After watching last week's *Country File*, Mr Parker was very excited to learn that they had launched a two year initiative called '[Plant Britain](#)' and they are urging viewers to help grow trees as well.



Celebration Assemblies

Please look out for the updates on Facebook next week and the ways in which we aim to recognise, reward and celebrate our super students.

A Christmas Carol

Between 1pm and 3pm on the final Wednesday of term we shall all go back to tutor groups and watch the Old Vic's production of the Dickens classic. The response from families has been great (one theatre loving family donated £100) and any monies left over after paying for the tickets will be donated to our local theatre.



GCSE and A level examinations Update 2021

Last week, the Government released long awaited details on how next summer's GCSE and A level examinations will be amended to reflect the demands placed on current year 11 and 13 students across England. In addition to examinations beginning up to three weeks later than normal, the Secretary of State for Education outlined the following:

- More generous grading than usual, in line with national outcomes from 2020, so students this year are not disadvantaged;
- Students receiving advance notice of some topic areas covered in GCSE, AS and A levels to focus revision;
- Exam aids, for example formula sheets, provided in some exams giving students more confidence and reducing the amount of information they need to memorise;
- Additional exams to give students a second chance to sit a paper if the main exams or assessments are missed due to illness or self-isolation;
- A new expert group to look at differential learning and monitor the variation in the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on students across the country.

Please note the additional information provided to students and their families [by clicking here](#).

And finally...

On Monday, I shall set out how we shall liaise over the Christmas break in the event of there being a confirmed case amongst our students. There will be a limited period, which we shall set out, that requires any positive cases to be reported to us so that we may inform other families that their children have been close contacts and therefore need to self-isolate. It is a complex matter and so I shall devote some time to communicating this to you on Monday in my final letter of the year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Doherty'.

Mr Doherty

Headteacher