



Leadership Team:

Barry Doherty (Headteacher)
Natalie Hancock
Alan Trainer
Daniel Gent
Yvette Armistead
Lisa De Bruyn

Friday 9 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I had written the bulk of this letter before the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was announced. After what seems like years or decades of stability, the last few years have been tumultuous and we will be mindful of how this is also seen through the eyes of our children.

Your children may have told you how we chose to pay our respects this morning. In the coming days we will consider an appropriate way to honour her life and acknowledge the widespread affection and sadness evident here today.

And so, returning to my end of week letter to you, please forgive any impression of inappropriate lightness.

Values and Beliefs

For the first time in a long time, yesterday, I was able to hold traditional assemblies in our refurbished hall with years 7 to 11. I began each one by reflecting on the privilege it is to speak to so many people at once, and the expectation to speak about something of significance and importance. No pressure there...

I suspect that there may be some parents and carers who wonder what we talk about in our assemblies, and whether much has changed over the years. I cannot compare to your own school assemblies, but things are pretty different from my perspective.

Standards

I began by talking about the desire for us all to seek excellence in all we do. To aim to be better tomorrow than we are today. My recurring message is we are a unique species that can choose to hack the way we think, feel and behave if we can honestly reflect on our triumphs and challenges.

Expectations

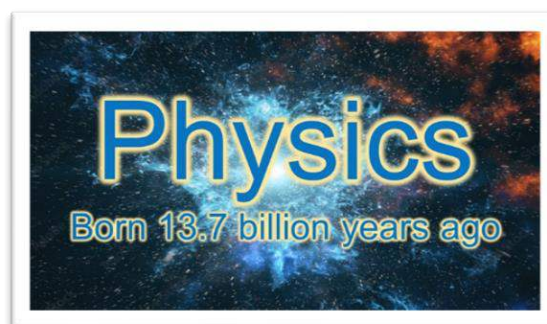
I then moved on to talk about what your children can expect of us all at CNS. Not simply the way we shall teach and plan their learning, but also the care, guidance and support in place. I linked that to the other side of 'the deal'; whereby students also commit to our three core expectations to be ready, safe and respectful.

Stronger Together

This was a helpful way to reflect on the superb GCSE and A level results and remind us all that those successes were the result of team work on many levels. Everyone working for one another, achieving more together than alone.

Awe and Wonder

I admitted that the thing that gets me most excited about schools and education is exploring the vast ocean of knowledge in our universe. I told your children the greatest story ever told;



EVERYONE ACHIEVING EVERYONE BELONGING

how we came out of nothing from the moment physics was born 13.7 billion years ago, to the emergence of health and social care in the last few hundred years.

My goal was to illustrate the incredible journey of our universe, world and humankind - drawing attention to the awe and wonder that can be found in each and every subject – what one writer called ‘the magic of reality’.

I do not think it is too much to expect or imagine that every student can be in awe of an equation, poem, landscape or concept. Watching a young person’s reaction to the thought it would take twenty years to fly a jumbo jet to the Sun, and five million years to the next nearest star is a joy. Or contemplating that whilst it might take just seventeen minutes to count to one thousand, it would take thirty-one years to count to one billion. Using those scales as a way to convey time and distance allows us to unveil the extraordinary dimensions of our bigger history.

My goal was to remind us all that high expectations and standards are merely a means to an end, not the end in itself. They combine to give each student the best possible chance to discover and learn in an atmosphere that encourages fascination, passion, excitement and fulfilment. *That* is what school is all about.

Early Closure / Open Evening

I will of course remind you nearer the time but want to give plenty of advance notice that the school will close early on Thursday 6 October, ahead of the open evening. It will be a three-period day and students and buses will leave at 12:30pm.

Regarding our forthcoming open evening for year 5s and 6s, we are hoping that many more of our students will be willing to participate in the evening than ever before. We look forward to having year 7s in lessons again, with sixth formers and year 8s being the guides this year. Year 9s and 10s will be invited to take part in sports, with year 11s showing off their work in design & technology, computing, art & design, drama, dance and music.

Whilst the school will be spotless and everything will be in its place on that night, it’s the students that families want to see as they picture how their child might turn out at CNS. Our students are our greatest feature and we would like them, more than ever, to be here with us on that night.

We shall be writing to families in years 5 and 6 this time next week, and invite them to our traditional open evening event.

And finally...

Naturally, our thoughts and prayers are with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and her family. During the period of mourning we will think carefully about our activities and curriculum, but there is a very clear message to schools around continuing with normality, perhaps mirroring that fortitude and courage.

We know that everyone is looking forward to a few days rest now and then our first full week of term.

Yours faithfully



Barry Doherty
Headteacher

