



Leadership Team:

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Friday 3 November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to term two and I hope the first few days have gone smoothly with good routines back in place.

Mock Examinations Underway

Our year 11s are now well and truly into their mock examinations and have impressed everyone with their focus and commitment. We wish them well and note that our year 13s will be next, later this term, and before we know it the examination season will be with us again. We take a great deal of care in preparing all students for those mock examinations and try to lift some of the burdens and secure success and therefore motivation. Each year we are more and more confident that our year 11s possess the skills necessary to prepare for the examinations, displaying greater independence, personal organisation and time management skills.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education Update

The Secretary of State for Education, the Right Honourable Gillian Keegan MP, wrote to all headteachers last week to remind them that all schools can and should share curriculum materials with parents and carers, and drew attention to ‘concerns in relation to materials used to teach relationships, sex and health education (RSHE)’. Consequently, schools are encouraged to reassure families. Firstly, you may recall that I [wrote to families about eighteen months ago](#) inviting them to take part in a related consultation, led by Ms Skill (Head of Character Education). This led to the refinement of our [policy](#) and families are welcome to explore the overview of our entire [character education curriculum](#), or approach Ms Skill directly, for further information. As you would expect, this and all other curriculum decisions are taken very thoughtfully and carefully. Going forward, a letter will also be sent to parents and carers before a new RSHE topic begins so that families are aware.

Attendance Matters

It was good to see improvements in attendance in the final week of term. Compared to last year, our attendance so far this year is slightly lower. It is of course very difficult to avoid sickness for an entire year and so we must not be too downhearted if we miss an occasional day.

Our goal is for average attendance to be the equivalent of no more than 10 days absent out of total of 190 school days each year. Keeping absence below that number will lead to strong attendance (95%+) by the end of the year. It is a marathon and not a sprint and so that is why we encourage students to return from an absence and to start a new streak of attendance. Good luck!

Mon 16 to Wed 18 Oct 2023	
Whole school	92.1%
Year 7	97.4% (+3.6%)
Year 8	90.4% (+1.0%)
Year 9	88.5% (+0.2%)
Year 10	90.3% (+1.5%)
Year 11	93.2% (+1.9%)
Year 12	95.7% (=)
Year 13	94.5% (-0.1%)
No. still on 100%	389 /1000

School Improvement Priorities

Starting this week, I shall be providing parents and carers with a snapshot of each part of our school improvement plan. I understand that there will be varying levels of interest in these plans but I want to give every family the opportunity to know a little more about what we are doing to try and further improve our school.

Our school improvement plan is in two parts: **everyone achieving and everyone belonging**. It is quite simple and emphasises that our ambitious goal is to be a great school for *everyone*. The ‘everyone achieving’ part of the plan is divided into eight sections.



I hope to dip briefly into each one of those ‘good to great (G2G) goals’ with you over time, so that you gain a better understanding of what we are trying to do to make CNS a great school for all children. As I do so, I will sometimes draw on our ‘Progress 8 data’. This data allows us to compare the progress our students make to students in other schools nationally. Last year at CNS, our overall Progress 8 score was +0.71 (well above average) meaning that the average grade secured by CNS was almost three quarters of a grade higher than all schools - thus turning grades 3s into 4s, or grades 6s into 7s and 8s.

G2G Goal 1a: SEND Outcomes	
What is our goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to improve outcomes and experiences for all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), so that both they and their families always feel known, valued and successful.
Why is this our goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is because children with SEND are at greater risk of underachievement in all schools.
Where are we now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022 and (even more so) in 2023, <u>all</u> groups of students were very successful indeed. The progress made by all students in 2023 was extremely high (+0.71), but also very high amongst lower (+0.16), middle (+0.86) and higher (+0.80) attaining students. In the past, lower prior attaining students have not been as successful and therefore we are determined to build on these more recent successes and go from strength to strength.
What are some of the things that we are going to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We shall continue to prioritise the training and development of teaching staff so that we become more and more effective in understanding and meeting the needs of children with SEND. We shall improve the guidance we give to every teacher about each child on our SEND register so that they know how to play to their strengths and overcome hurdles. Children with SEND will be entitled to more rapid careers advice and guidance to ensure post 16 pathways are known and pursued from an earlier age. When we quality assure lessons and students’ work, we shall pay disproportionate attention to whether lessons and learning are successfully adapted for children with SEND. We will carry out routine end of unit surveys (of all students) to understand if our lessons are engaging, enjoyable and successful.

If you have any questions, observations or ideas on any aspect of this school improvement goal, then please do email me and I shall either respond or ask a better-placed colleague to do so.

And finally...

I do hope the recent weather has not affected your homes or relatives. As I type, we await the overnight gales and look forward to some clearer skies and settled weather. Looking ahead, please note that tickets for our production of The Addams Family are now on sale (via Parent Pay). Tickets are £10 (£8 concessions). It promises to deliver more memorable evenings for the cast, crew and audiences: Thursday 7, Friday 8 and Saturday 9 December.

Have a lovely weekend!

Yours faithfully



Barry Doherty, Headteacher

