



Friday 23 May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

Leadership Team:

Barry Doherty (Headteacher)
Natalie Hancock (DSL)
Alan Trainer
Daniel Gent
Yvette Armistead

As we approach the half term, my colleagues have asked me to pass on our thanks and praise to all of Year 11s and Year 13s who have been superb throughout this first phase of the examination season. The vibes have been encouraging and we hope this has motivated each student to go into the half term with an even deeper determination to secure the grades they need *and* deserve. Much like a normal working week for an adult, we would very strongly recommend that each student completes in the region of 35-40 hours of revision over the nine-day break – splitting that time carefully so that there is a good distribution of work, rest *and* play.

Year 7 Sponsored Screen-Swap

In association with the PTA, we shall be in touch with all Year 7 families after half term to launch a sponsored screen-swap for ten days in June. More details to follow but we have a great deal planned to extol the virtues of electricity-less games and activities and to promote more face-to-face social interactions. It should be fun and also raise some money towards our outdoor area as well. Watch this space!



Survey Updates

You may recall the RLT-wide surveys that were undertaken before Easter right across the Trust involved students, parents and carers, and staff in all schools. We have now received those results and will work with Mr Richter, the Governing Body, student council and colleagues to pull out the key messages and areas for improvement and focus next year. Whilst we have been very, very encouraged by the feedback there have been some helpful pointers to further develop students' ideas for belonging and connectedness - and perhaps further room for in-school activities and trips that are clearly highly valued by our students. Furthermore, straight after half term parents and carers of children on our SEND register will be invited to take part in our annual survey. This is the final piece in the annual jigsaw of feedback that enables us to listen and learn from our students, parents and carers and therefore we hope to secure close to 100% participation this year.

Year Group Updates

After half term, all of Year 9s will commence their GCSEs and BTECs in earnest. Whilst this is already underway in English, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics, this will now be the case for the three GCSE or BTEC options they have recently selected. We always note that this is a significant and poignant time for Year 9s as they recognise the transition to the final stage of their secondary school life. Strong attendance, alongside full engagement and commitment in lessons and with homework, become even more important and we wish them well as they embark on the next stage of their academic life at CNS.

Meanwhile, as Mrs Budd switches her attention to the incoming Year 7s, Mr Goodson will become the Year 9 Senior Pastoral Leader and see the year group through years 10 and 11; until their own GCSE examinations are completed in two years' time. Mrs Budd (next year's Year 7 Senior Pastoral leader) will be working very closely with Mrs Faulkner (Head of Transition) and Mrs Smart (SENDCo) to ensure that all of our new arrivals are known and understood in readiness for the transition days on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 July.



Ditchley Park Celebration

To greater and lesser degrees, you will be aware of the amazing work undertaken at *The Branch* on behalf of the entire community. Earlier this week a large group of our students volunteered to support the catering and to speak to the 100+ guests, as part of a major fundraising event. They did so with confidence and represented *The Branch* and our school in ways that have left staff feeling deeply proud and privileged to know and work with such wonderful young people. Thank you and well done to Lily, Imogen Emne, James, Archie, Dane, Gary and Reece – we hope you enjoy your surprise Costa vouchers!

Extra-Special Extra-Time LAMDA Results

We are extremely proud of our LAMDA students who have achieved remarkable results again in the group exams which took place at the end of the Spring Term. This time around we entered groups from years 7, 8, 9 and 10 – all of whom received a distinction. Two very dedicated students from Year 11, Kenda Daymond and Eleanor Howard, who have taken part in the club throughout their time so far at CNS, this time entered the Bronze Medal duo exam, attaining incredible results in this demanding level. Very well done to you all. We offer LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts) as an Extra-Time club, where our qualified and enthusiastic coaches help our students to develop self-expression and self-assurance through drama.

Blenheim 7k Fun Run

A large number of students and staff took part in last weekend's fun run at Blenheim Palace. Mrs Faulkner is pictured here with Johnny (left) and Harrison (right) – winners of the team event. In fact, for the second year running, Johnny (Year 12) won the race itself with an impressive time of just 26 minutes and 57 seconds.

And finally...

Pictured below are Erin and Orla, who recently visited Buckingham Palace to collect their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. It is very well known that any Duke of Edinburgh Award is valued by employers as a very strong indication of courage, commitment and resilience. However, those who secure the Silver and Gold awards really do stand out and certainly deserve their day in one of the world's most famous and illustrious settings. Both Erin and Orla, for instance, have completed twelve months of volunteering and embarked on a much more challenging expedition.

Congratulations to Erin and Orla, and also to the dozens of CNS students currently participating or nearing the completion of their own Bronze (112 students), Silver (47 students) and Gold (20 students) programmes with Miss Richmond and Miss Miles.

Yours faithfully



Barry Doherty, *Headteacher*

