



19 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **Extra-curricular Opportunities**

The school has felt like it has properly started to re-open this week. Clubs and extracurricular opportunities have begun to roll out (**Please make sure you look at the Parent and Student bulletin for club days and times**). On Thursday evening I walked up to Maths after school and was delighted to see our most able Year 11 mathematicians working hard in their A-Level Maths club along with around 25 KS3 students fully engaged at the Puzzle Pi-rates club.

The PE department had reported great numbers at their clubs earlier in the week too. We also had a Science 'Revision breakfast' this morning for Year 11 and there was the Space Club for KS3 yesterday. Please talk to your sons and daughters about making the most of all the opportunities the school is offering. After such a disrupted year making the most of these engaging and stimulating extras can only help future academic progress.

### **Standards and Hegarty Maths**

As you can see we are pushing in many areas of the school to drive up standards. Next week my Leadership team and middle leaders will be out and about observing lessons to quality assure that all students are getting a great deal. Along with this we have brought in Hegarty Maths to the school. Hegarty Maths is a software package used by many of the highest performing schools in the country and when used in a sustained manner over a number of years is proven to improve performance in Maths. Hegarty's brilliance is that it provides the students with an instructional video, notes and worked examples and really supports the students before they have to do the final exercise. We are asking that all students need to gain a 70% pass rate in the exercises that are set (students can even write notes to the teacher about what they've struggled with) however, if 70% isn't achieved in the first run it can be done again to gain that pass mark. Success in Maths is about practice and embedding the skills taught in lessons and Hegarty is a wonderful asset for the school and the students to develop and improve their numeracy skills over a period of time. The Maths department are running drop in sessions each week for any students, along with this each class teacher has offered to help individuals with any issues they may have and queries can be emailed directly to them. Please can I ask that you support this initiative as I know that once students get into the right habits it will really benefit them.

### **House System gets back on track**

The House System also came back to life this week with House assemblies for all students outlining our programme for the next few weeks. The House system is such a good way of developing leadership and character and it was a pleasure to see the Year 11 house leaders speak with clarity and enthusiasm on each morning. Next week will see all house points doubled so it is a great incentive for each student to really help their house move forwards through academic and wider school contributions. In the next few weeks we will be hosting an inter house quiz, inter house rounders and a Spelling Bee which is really exciting.

### **Year 11 and grading**

On Wednesday evening Miss Bliss and I hosted a Year 11 parents' forum to outline the plans for Year 11 and grading. I was delighted at the strong levels of turn out and engagement with the process and I hope parents feel reassured by the rigour of the system that we will be using that will reward previous work but also allow students to excel over the next few weeks. I was at a Reading Heads meeting



followed by an Oxfordshire Heads meeting yesterday (lucky me!!) and this was a big topic of conversation. I came away reassured that the processes we will be using are as good as any other school locally.

### **Home Testing**

Our Home Testing kits went home this week. Please can I ask that your son/daughter completes a test each weekend and midweek. Keeping the Covid infection rate down is so important in terms of keeping schools open and we all still need to play our part in making sure no-one who is asymptomatic but Covid positive spreads the virus amongst our community. There will be another testing kit box sent home at the end of next week for the Easter break.

### **Red Nose Day**

I have been delighted at the way the school community has embraced Red Nose Day and so far we have raised **£497** for this terrific cause. Students were given this information in their house assemblies and it has been wonderful to see how they have bought into it and supported it. There will be more notifications about community 'Character Education' and celebrating diversity over the next few weeks which is another strand of our school development plan. Watch this space for details!

### **Reminders**

Mrs Benham has asked me to remind any parents of SEND students that she runs regular surgery appointments for anyone needing them so that we can support any students with additional needs.

Can I also remind you to complete our Parent Survey if you haven't done so far? Please use [this link](#).

### **Last day of term**

Please be reminded that our **last day of term is Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April**. We will finish at the normal time of **3.10pm** on this day. I took the decision not to have an early finish as a lot of face to face schooling has been missed recently, the holiday is over two weeks and Year 11 need to be in every lesson possible in the run up to their final assessments.

### **Stars of the week**

My staff members of the week are Ms Hardman for amazing breaktime science demonstrations as part of Science week alongside running a plethora of extracurricular opportunities, closely followed by the Maths team for their great collective work in moving Maths forwards and ensuring everyone gets the best chances of success.

My student of the week is Rhiannon in Year 10 for her sterling work in re-starting our LGBTQ+ student group. We look forwards to supporting Rhiannon over the next few months with her group's activities.

Please do not forget to use our [FAB](#) and [DRAB](#) links to leave any feedback you may have.

Have a great weekend.

Take care and stay safe

Andy Hartley  
Headteacher