



19 November 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you're all well and staying Covid free. It is clear that Covid is still very much present in the local area with another uptick in the local primaries. However, at present, we currently (as of Thursday afternoon) have only had one confirmed case and so we will keep our current measures of ventilation and one-way systems. Moving forwards if the case numbers do rise once again we will consider making face coverings in lessons mandatory but we are a long way from that situation at present.

Homework

Please can I ask you to really push homework with your children (if you are not doing so already!!). Our homework is generally set around knowledge consolidation and revisiting learning as cognitive science research shows that by returning to topics and 'overlearning', students commit this knowledge to their long-term memories. This action builds both competence and confidence in tackling new topics and relating this new learning to prior knowledge. There is always a lunchtime detention as a sanction for non-completion of homework but the most important aspect is that students complete this work for the sake of their own academic progress.

Staff INSET

On Wednesday our staff spent three hours after school in a training session focused on 'challenge in the classroom', 'behaviour and SEND students' and a session of Year 11 mock marking moderation. It was great to spend time with such enthusiastic professionals and hear them discussing with great passion their love of their subjects and the way they are currently pushing the students. For instance, in Year 8 the students are currently comparing the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the Haitian Revolution and evaluating the most significant of the three uprisings. I am so proud to work with teachers who are stretching the students with such interesting topics.

Careers work

Building on our work with Henley College last week we have begun our work with BEEP, a charity based in Berkshire, supporting students with exploring post 16 provision. They will be doing some bespoke work 1:1 with targeted students. This will complement our existing Careers programme by offering a further opportunity to work with local employers and Post 16 providers to seek opportunities for our students.

Pastoral Day

Today we held one of our two annual pastoral days covering a wide range of themes from internet safety, gender discrimination, drugs, peer pressure, careers and interview technique. As a school our remit falls much wider than the taught curriculum and today's session will supplement our usual PSHE lessons and assemblies. The day has gone incredibly well and our students have engaged with the topics and activities in a very mature and positive manner.

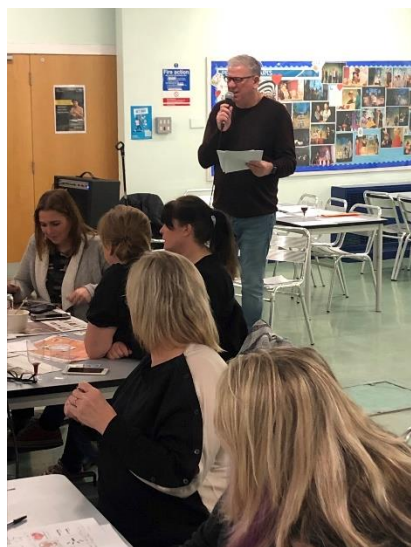
Anti-Bullying assembly

I had the pleasure of attending an assembly led by Ms Biddiss and our anti bullying ambassadors earlier this week. The ambassadors were recently trained by the Diana Award and were explaining why it is so important young people do not bully each other. We will continue to push this message through a variety of strategies and actions but I am very proud that we are working very hard on this initiative.



CESA quiz

Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the CESA quiz. It was a brilliant evening full of jokes, drinks and quizzing. It was lovely that a team of Year 7 parents triumphed. The event raised around £500 for the PTA which is just brilliant and will be used for all sorts of great projects.



Wreath laying

On Sunday I accompanied students Akshaye and Imogen to lay a wreath on behalf of the school at St John's Church, Kidmore End. The students were wonderful ambassadors for our school and the service was incredibly moving. We were both proud and delighted to have been invited to this community event.



Community morning

Can I make another plea for volunteers for our community gardening morning at 9am on December 4. We will work across the morning transforming our old allotment space and sensory garden. There will be teas, coffees and a bacon sarnie thrown in. All you need is a spade and a smile!

My staff members of the week are:

Mr Perry-for his brilliant quizmastering last Friday with an evening full of dad gags and one liners.

Mrs Hills and Mrs Clarke for their superb staff INSET sessions on Wednesday evening.

My students of the week go to **Imogen and Akshaye** for giving up their Sunday morning to represent school so magnificently.

Please don't hesitate to leave us some feedback by clicking on the links below.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Andy Hartley
Headteacher

