



4 November 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

Welcome Back!

I hope you are all well and you were able to spend some quality time together over the half term break. The unseasonably warm weather seems a long way away by the end of this week, so I hope you did all get some time outside in the autumnal sunshine.

Exams

We have returned to school this week with a good stretch of 34 school days until the Christmas break. There is lots packed into the half term with Year 11 kicking things off with their PPE exams this week (mocks in old money!). It has been interesting to observe the various levels of confidence, bluster and pain that these practice examinations provide. However, as has always been the case, these papers shine a light on what is known, what is still developing, and which areas of the syllabi need some extended attention. What is particularly important is that if the exams have not gone to plan then the students pay close attention to the lessons learned. In addition, for Year 11, Mrs Ashley has been busy writing references for some of our students who have applied to prestigious post 16 destinations, and we cannot wait to find out how their interviews go over the next few weeks.

Sleep

Once again, it has been sad to observe too many students coming back to school on Monday very tired and struggling to concentrate in lessons. The teenage brain needs sleep if it is to stand any chance of success with the 'brain pain' of Maths, Science and extended writing. Research also shows that the sleep deprived brain is much less likely to make correct decisions from an emotional perspective and that adolescents that do not have good sleep habits are more likely to develop anxiety-based conditions. Please do try and work with your children on a regular decent bedtime and making sure the bedroom is a calm phone free space.

Kooth

With regard to positive adolescent mental health the school has access to the Kooth service. Kooth is a safe, free and anonymous service where young people aged 11-19 can access counselling support 365 days a year from 12pm-10pm weekdays, and 6pm-10pm weekends. This is through either live drop-in or pre-arranged text-based chat sessions with their online counselling team.

You can also access peer-led support in a safe and inclusive mental health community and several wellbeing and self-help tools, such as the Kooth Journal, Kooth Goals system, and a variety of wellbeing activities.

[Sign up to Kooth](#) - be sure to select Berkshire West as your area and then choose your relevant location (i.e. Reading).


MECE Core routines






I have been delivering an assembly this week focusing on some of our core behaviours, ethos and routines.

The slides below summarise some of the key messages that I have been delivering.

MECE Core Routines



 MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE

-  Sit up in silence
-  Listen attentively
-  Ask and answer questions
-  No communication with your peers unless instructed to do so
-  Track the speaker or the learning

TREAT STAFF LIKE



PLATINUM

Staff care about me and my future.

I never answer back, roll my eyes,
mutter under my breath or refuse to follow teacher instructions.

Staff are here to help me be my best, so
I treat them with total respect.

We are working hard as staff to give the students a consistent approach and I have spent some time reading and researching some of the ideas that other schools have applied successfully. As the school continues to move forwards over the next few weeks I hope we can see these ideas embed and reap the rewards.

A Christmas Carol

Later this term, we have our school show 'A Christmas Carol' which is the perfect play for 13 and 15 December. The cast and crew are hard at it rehearsing and getting ready for the event which is (fingers crossed!) so much less Covid affected than last year's production. Details of ticket sales will be released in a few weeks' time.

Presentation Evening

Also coming up later this term is our annual Presentation Evening, and we will be joined by Jon Peck, our new CEO, for the event. The evening is always one that shows off the absolute best of the school and rewards those students who regularly have gone over and above to develop academically. It will be an especial pleasure to catch up with some of our returning students from last year's Year 11 to find out how they are doing in their new schools and colleges.

INSET day

Please be reminded that **Friday 25 November** will be an INSET day and therefore students should not come to school on that day (there is always one who does!!).

Stars of the week


My student star of the week for this week is **Ben from Year 10** who achieved 60 out of 60 in his half termly Maths assessment that covered one of the most difficult GCSE topics. A great achievement that bodes well for next year!

My staff star of the week is **Miss Jackson** who has been excellent in supporting her colleagues in the English department over the last few weeks.

Please do not hesitate to send in any feedback through the links below.

Have a great weekend

Yours sincerely



Andy Hartley

