



3 February 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you are all well and taking consolation in the fact that Spring seems closer now and it is a relief to know that from Monday onwards sunset is after 5pm. It has felt like a long winter!

### **Strike**

This has been another interesting week in my time as Headteacher! The industrial action taken by the NEU on Wednesday led to a lot of logistics in the background which took a lot of time over the last week. As Headteacher, it is a very difficult position to be in, as I obviously would like to see my staff get paid a higher wage for their excellent work. However, myself and my leadership team also have the responsibility of keeping the school open, if possible, and ensuring those not striking and those students attending school remain safe. The setting of work is also tricky, as non-striking colleagues shouldn't set work for those on strike. All in all, it is both a political and moral minefield, but I hope we were able to navigate it with a degree of success on Wednesday.

Please have the planned dates for further industrial action by the NEU in your diary:

- **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- **March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>**

With these dates in mind, please note that the **Year 10 Parents' Evening** will now be on **March 1<sup>st</sup>**.

### **Young Writers**

A big 'Well Done!' to Miss Jackson and the 148 students who will be published in an upcoming Young Writers anthology. Miss Jackson has successfully applied on a number of occasions for our students to get their work in print, but this bumper haul is really quite something. The thrill of seeing your work in print is always fantastic and I know many of our students have been really pleased by this event.

### **Community Spirit**

Year 7 are currently on a kindness drive and staff are working hard to recognise acts of MECE kindness whenever they see it. However, I wanted to draw your attention to some outstanding acts of community kindness that I have overheard regarding our students during this week. Firstly, one of our Year 9s purchasing some clothing for a homeless lady in Reading who was clearly in need on a cold January day. Secondly, of one of our Year 8s supporting an elderly gentleman who was being spoken to very rudely by some other teenagers outside a local supermarket. Thirdly, of a Year 8 who took time to speak to a member of staff to make sure they were OK and lastly, of a Year 11 supporting and showing patience with a Year 7 when they were getting upset at not being able to tie their own tie. All these examples are heart-warming and demonstrate that so many of our students have the values we would want any of our young people to have.

### **Bus Passes**

As you know Reading Buses are on a real drive to ensure each student travelling has a valid pass. The 'school run' drivers will always let students who have lost their pass that day travel, however, this campaign has been to make sure those students who go weeks and longer without a pass do get themselves organised. It seems to be working and we are down to the last few students waiting for their passes to be delivered.

### **Behaviour Hub Visit**

Last Thursday we were visited by Headteachers from a Trust in Nottinghamshire to look at the school and our routines, expectations and behaviour culture. This was a part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust's work for the Department for Education Behaviour Hub project.

It was an interesting visit and the key things that they observed were how well our students were listening, the calm classrooms, how few students were out of lessons in corridors and other spaces, how well dressed the students were and the lack of mobile phones anywhere. Of course, we know there is always room for improvement, but it is good to know how favourably we compare to a Trust that serves schools across Nottinghamshire and is representative of a broad section of society.

### **INSET day**

Please be reminded next Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, is an INSET day and the school will be closed to all pupils. As always, there will be one student who comes in, in full uniform, looking confused that the door is locked. Please try to ensure it's not your child!

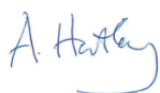
### **Stars**

My student star for this week is **Samuel** in Year 8 for always going the extra mile to ensure the MECE brand and name is well loved and respected across Caversham and beyond!

My staff star of the week is **Mr Groves**, our English teacher, who will always step forward and volunteer if an extra pair of hands. A true #teammece hero.

Please do not hesitate to click on the links below and leave any feedback you may have.

Have a great weekend.



Andy Hartley  
Headteacher

