



3 March 2023

Dear Parent / Guardian

I hope everyone is well and enjoying the lighter evenings, although the snow in next week's weather forecast is an interesting addition to early March! We will be keeping a keen eye on things although hopefully it's no more than a sprinkling.

Year 10 Parents' Evening

Last Wednesday evening saw our Year 10 parents and students come up to school to discuss their progress. As headteacher I didn't have any appointments but used the occasion to touch base with many of our MECE families, to make sure they are OK and that things are progressing as they should. It was heart-warming to hear and take part in so many positive exchanges across the evening. I know many schools have continued with online parent's events, and there are many advantages to this method. However, the face-to-face conversation with the students in attendance always seems so much more powerful than the online '5 minute only' exchange that the online parents' evening presents (and it is without the barking dogs, crying babies, arguing siblings and poor Wi-Fi that these events can sometimes throw up).

Treating Each Other Like Platinum and Positive Relationships

I have been discussing our suspensions to date with my Chair of Governors, our Director of Inclusion, and our Director of Education. In all cases these have been positive exchanges, and we have discussed our strategies of how we can support students to improve their behaviour as well as engaging parents in a trinity, by all working together to stay on track. However, key themes that run through these suspensions is that I won't accept bullying behaviours, fighting or using foul and profane language to staff. As the students know, I ask members of the MECE community to treat each other with respect, as school is a formal environment and I hope by being clear on these matters, we can support our students in developing positive life habits that will serve them well both in employment, and social situations for many years to come.

Community and Support

It was lovely to spend some time with Suzanne Lovegrove, our PTA Chair, on Wednesday, to discuss fundraising ideas. Suzanne works tirelessly, supported by her team, to raise money for the school. Indeed, the lottery relaunch alone will raise towards £3000 this year which is fantastic. If you haven't already signed up, please do so [here](#).

However, amongst this fundraising, the work she leads, providing free uniform for those families most in need, is fantastic work, and additionally the effort to source affordable second-hand prom dresses for our Year 11 students is so touching and says so much about us as a school.

Furthermore, our efforts to support our most needy students have been boosted by a donation from Johnson Matthey, the Sonning Common based pharmaceutical company.

The money, £1260, will be used for student rewards and to also support our food bank, and uniform store, and we are incredibly grateful for this support from one of our local companies.

If any other parents or members of our community wish to support us in a similar manner, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at a.hartley@maidenerleghtrust.org

Primary Schools Sports Hall Athletics Hosted at MECE

It was also splendid to host both the Oxfordshire Primary Schools Cross Country Championships last Saturday, and the local primary schools in the Sports Hall Athletics competition on Wednesday. I would like to thank Mr Hunter for his great work in making sure we are always ready to say 'yes' to support our partner schools in making these enrichment events possible. I popped in to see the Sports Hall championships and whilst ear piercing in the decibel levels, it was delightful to see the unfettered enthusiasm of these young pupils.

September 2023 Student Numbers

We were delighted to receive the names of our students for September 2023 this week. It has been really pleasing to see that despite a drop in Year 6 numbers locally, our first preference numbers have gone from 72 last year to 107 this year, with similar increases in our second preferences. I was also delighted to see so many siblings of our current students in those names - true MECE families! It seems clear that we will be full in Year 7 next September for the first time in many years and given the parlous state of the student numbers a few years ago, that is so pleasing.

Moving a school forward is a lengthy process but metrics such as our growing student roll, vastly improved GCSE results and our 2021 OFSTED grading are vital signs of our wonderful school, and community that we are building.

Stars of the week

My staff star of the week is **Mrs Gehlot**, our School Business Manager, who has co-ordinated our support teams this week despite some staff absence, as well as performing her post to an incredibly high level. A true #teammece warrior!

My student star of the week is **Lloyd** in Year 10, who is really progressing both academically and personally, and I have heard great things about his recent guitar playing performance at a local open mic session.

Please leave any feedback you have using the links below.

Have a great weekend.

Andy Hartley
Headteacher

