



15 May 2026

Dear parents and carers,

This week, every year, is a poignant and exciting one. For Year 11s their formal time at school ends (with Study Leave starting) and for Year 9s the journey towards GCSEs takes a big step forward.

On Thursday we celebrated our Year 11 students completing five years with us. There was a wonderful blend of excitement and poignancy as we gathered for their final assembly. As always, it was a lively occasion, filled with humorous stories, nostalgic Year 7 photographs, and heartfelt reflections on their journey.

We heard from our Head Students, Mr Mount (Head of Year), tutors, and I also had the privilege of sharing some words. It was a moment to celebrate not only their achievements but also the young people they have become.

Year 11 will, of course, continue to attend school for their examinations and timetabled revision sessions. We wish them every success in the weeks ahead.



On Thursday afternoon, Year 9 students received their initial Options allocations. There was a real sense of excitement, alongside a few nerves, as they listened to the assembly and opened their allocations. The vast majority were delighted, with many smiling faces around the room.

We will now begin working closely with the small number of students who may need to rethink on their original preferences. We are pleased to be offering 12 courses,



including Drama, Computing and Music, alongside the new addition of Health and Social Care. Additionally, some students will be taking an additional “home language” to complement their suite of qualifications.

While enthusiasm was high, there was slightly less excitement at the prospect of English, Maths and Science exams in mid-June! Full details will be shared shortly, including the support and revision programme as part of our “Get Set for Year 10” initiative.

On Wednesday, we were pleased to welcome Year 5 pupils from Sonning Common Primary and Kidmore End Primary for their “Introduction to High School” Day. They enjoyed a full and engaging schedule, with lessons in History, Geography, Art, Drama, and Music, along with a PE session to round off the day. Our Year 8 student ambassadors played a key role, and were rightly praised for their kindness, confidence and supportive approach. They were excellent role models and should be very proud of themselves.

Last weekend saw plenty of activity with both the CESA quiz and DofE Bronze camping taking place. The **CESA Quiz Night was once again** a fantastic evening in the canteen, with teams testing their knowledge across a range of topics including acronyms, Mr Men characters, London Underground stations and Shakespeare.

Last year’s champions successfully defended their title with an impressive final round, narrowly pushing the staff team into second place.

Thank you to everyone who attended.

Meanwhile, 40 Year 9 students camped on the school field as part of their DofE expedition practice. Thankfully, it was an *uneventful* night, which is always a positive sign for camping! On Saturday, they completed a 10km walk, developing their teamwork and navigation skills in preparation for their assessed expedition.

Alongside the expedition, students continue to work on their other Duke of Edinburgh components: Skill, Sport and Volunteering. It has been wonderful to hear about the wide range of volunteering activities, including: Litter picking on the Amersham Road Estate, community gardening projects, supporting maintenance around the school site, assisting at Sonning Common Pool and much more.



Our Eco Group have also been busy making a difference this week too. On Wednesday, they visited Widmore Pond in the Village, where they met community volunteers working on a conservation project. Students asked thoughtful questions and came away inspired with ideas for future school-based initiatives. They also shared homemade cookies with volunteers - a gesture that was very warmly received. And then yesterday, the group helped plant flowers in the quad in preparation for a special event.



This evening, we will be holding a private ceremony to dedicate a bench in memory of Dave Robinson, who taught here for over 30 years and sadly passed away last year. It will be a fitting tribute to a much-loved member of our school community.

This weekend, 18 of our students have artwork on display at the Fire Station Gallery in Henley-on-Thames, as part of an exhibition coordinated by Greener Henley. The exhibition is open to the public, and students will attend a private viewing on Monday. Many congratulations to all those involved — a fantastic achievement. Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable weekend.

Warm regards,

Miss E Bliss
Headteacher

