MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE
Headteacher: Emma Bliss
MA, NPQH

Reades Lane, Sonning Common, RG4 9LN
0118 972 1500
meceoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org
www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk
@MaidenErleghTru

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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope everyone enjoyed a restful half term break and had the opportunity to spend time with family and friends. It certainly feels as though autumn has arrived in earnest, with the "big coat" making an appearance for many of us this week already!

I also hope students made good use of the bonus Monday while staff were engaged in professional development activities. As a school, we are committed to continually developing and strengthening our practice, and the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues across the Trust is an important part of that journey.

This week has been dominated by our Year 11 PPE examinations. I have been incredibly impressed by the engagement, attendance, punctuality and positivity shown by students throughout the week. We have welcomed a number of new invigilators to the team too who have slotted in smoothly and have been quick to comment on how fantastic the students have been and how welcomed they have felt into the school. These are all excellent indicators as we continue to build towards the summer examinations. In fact, I even heard a couple of students describe themselves as being "excited for their exam" as they stepped off the bus one morning! Whilst perhaps not something you hear every day, it was a wonderful reflection of their confidence, attitude and determination to show just how far they have progressed in their learning.

The examinations continue into the start of next week before Year 11 head to Henley College on Thursday for a full taster day. This visit forms part of our ongoing support for students as they consider their post-16 options and prepare applications for next year. It will be a fantastic opportunity to experience college life alongside other Year 11 students from across South Oxfordshire.

Thinking about future pathways reminds me of an event from the final day of last term that I neglected to mention in my previous newsletter. Following our successful Mock Interview Day, ten of our volunteers stayed on to support our Year 8 Human Careers Library. Students had the opportunity to speak with professionals from a wide range of backgrounds, exploring different career paths, routes into employment and future opportunities. Events such as these are invaluable in broadening horizons, raising aspirations and helping students to see the many possibilities that lie ahead. My sincere thanks go to everyone who generously gave up their time to support the event and inspire our students.

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I have also been fortunate to spend a considerable amount of time in and out of lessons this week and, as always, have been impressed by the quality of learning taking place across the school. Among the many topics being explored were the benefits and challenges of living near active volcanoes, the prominence of men within religious texts, the accession of Elizabeth I, themes within *A Christmas Carol*, Asian fusion cooking, the movement of ions in chemical reactions, script work on Blood Brothers and musical compositions built around increasingly complex drum melodies. The breadth of experiences and opportunities available to our students never ceases to amaze me, and it has been wonderful to see students engaging so enthusiastically with such a diverse range of subjects.

House Points this week have been abundant too with the students below each earning over 20 – which in a 4-day week is pretty impressive:

Jacob, Francesa, Oliver, Aaron (Y7), Azor, Anouk, Dexter, Athina, Oli, Daniel, Hazel (Y8), Leo, Jak (Y9) & Zakary, Maja and Luke (Y10)

It is understandable that Y11 haven't recorded high volumes this week as the majority of their time has been spent in exams but I do want to highlight their excellent attendance which has topped the charts for the school this week – and 11D recording 100% attendance for the week- super! A further congratulations to 11B, 11C, 11A, 10C, 9A, 8B, 8C, 7A and 7B who have returned attendance for this week at over 93% - a great start back to the second part of this Autumn Term!

Finally, in some lovely community news, I am delighted to share that our Matilda-themed scarecrow entry was awarded second place in the village scarecrow trail. This was a fantastic achievement and a wonderful recognition of the creativity, effort and teamwork that went into producing it.

To all those celebrating Diwali, I send my very best wishes. May this Festival of Lights bring joy, hope, peace and prosperity to you and your loved ones. I hope the celebrations provide a special opportunity to come together with family and friends, share cherished traditions and create many happy memories. The values at the heart of Diwali, kindness, generosity, hope and the triumph of light over darkness, are ones that resonate strongly within our school community, making this a particularly special occasion to celebrate. And If you are attending any of the local fireworks display this weekend for Diwali or in celebration of Bonfire Night, I hope you have a wonderful time, keep warm and, most importantly, stay safe.



Have a wonderful weekend.

Miss E Bliss
Headteacher

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