



11 October 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

I wanted to let you know about our forthcoming Newsletter, which we will be using from the end of this half term to update you on school matters and celebrate the many great things about our school community. The Newsletter, which is called 'MECE Matters', will replace the 'Friday emails' the school used to send out and we are excited to say that our first one will be published in the next few weeks, so watch this space! Until then, this would seem like an opportune time to celebrate what has been an excellent and busy start to the school year for our students.

The first thing I'd like to mention is all the help we received from students on our Open Evening and the two Open Mornings we hosted at the start of September. Every parent whom I spoke to and many of the feedback cards we were left were, without exception, positive about the students. Many went on to praise the enthusiasm of our staff, their great relationships with students and the calm and purposeful learning environment they witnessed.

In terms of our Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM) provision, we're very excited to be working closely with Thales again and there are lots of events planned throughout the year. This relationship was fostered through Maiden Erlegh Trust and the number of events we can offer has grown this year thanks to their ongoing support. Year 9 boys have already experienced a session exploring the many opportunities and applications within STEAM in future careers. Year 9 girls will have the same opportunity next week and a selection of students in Years 7 and 8 will be undertaking workshops on coding using 'Ozobots' and a Lego engineering challenge. Photos and further details will be shared through MECE Matters and of course on Twitter.

Year 11 students are already benefitting from independent advice through their Careers Interviews with our Adviza partner. This is dovetailing with work in PSHE to look at post 16 provision and starting to prepare their CVs. Future events planned include opportunities to participate in a mock interview and a visit to Henley College in November. We're also excited to announce that we have formally launched Year 10 Work Experience calendared for May 2020. We are working closely with OXLEP to ensure that all students will have a place that meets their interests and needs. Our strong pastoral support continues through the work of our Heads of Year and tutor team, who have worked hard to ensure a steady and productive start to the school year.

Additionally, Year 7 students have benefitted from our new mentoring scheme. Each student has been assigned a mentor buddy from Year 9-11 to offer support and guidance during their first half term at MECE. Meetings take place weekly and the reports I'm getting are that they are really positive and filled with laughter!



Our KS4 Welcome Evening was well attended and was an opportunity to share are key messages for parents of Year 10 and 11 as they embark on their journey to GCSE success. Whilst these events allow us to spotlight key messages at the start of the year, please don't hesitate to contact your son or daughter's tutor (in the first instance) if you have queries or questions that come up throughout the term.

As we continue to align to established and successful Trust ways of working, we have now adopted the final part of the reporting process. This engaged our students in a dialogue that sees them set their own ambitious targets in each subject. You will see these reported on their tracking reports alongside the school-set benchmarks.

We always aim to offer students wider opportunities than the taught curriculum and none is more important than our Personal, Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (PSMSC) provision. This is woven throughout the broad curriculum we offer through lessons, assemblies and one-off events. For instance, this term, we were able to offer Year 7 and 8 students a special performance educating them about 'County Lines' and later this month there will be opportunities for some of our students to participate in our 'Restart a Heart' awareness day.

Our PE team have had a busy start to the year as usual and there have been lots of fixtures and well-attended training and clubs both during and after the school day.

Year 7s had their first fixtures for MECE and represented the school amazingly. The girls played in the South Oxfordshire School Games hockey tournament at Gillotts School coming 5th and the boys had their first rugby fixtures of the season at Bohunt School drawing one game and narrowly losing the other.

Year 11s started their rugby season strongly with a great win over Theale Green, 22-0. Their second game against Bohunt was unfortunately postponed due to inclement weather, hopefully this can be rearranged and we are confident of success!

On the morning of Saturday 5th October MECE hosted the South Oxfordshire Primary Schools winter series cross country event which was attended by hundreds of students from Years 1 to 6. It was a fantastic morning which was well represented by local primary schools. Look out for pictures in MECE Matters.

A massive thank you to CESA for organising and running the café and to all the staff and students who volunteered to make the morning possible. This would be a good point to flag up the great work that CESA (our Parents Association) do for the school and community. If you would like to get involved then please contact the school office in the first instance. The next winter series cross country event that we will be hosting is on Saturday 9th November 2019. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Following successful and competitive auditions last terms, 'Oliver!' rehearsals are now well under way, across the music, dance and drama disciplines and my thanks to the entire Performing Arts team, the cast and their backstage support crew for their hard work so far. If what I have seen and heard already is anything to go by, it promises to be another roaring success. Tickets will be available soon for the show which will run in late December.

Some of the many trips and visits we are aiming to offer again this year have already been completed. For example, year 11 Geographers completed their GCSE fieldwork with a trip to Henley-on-Thames and GCSE Musicians completed their visit to the



Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford to hear a live orchestral performance on Wednesday.

On 16 October our school will celebrate in the worldwide Restart a Heart (RSAH) Campaign to raise awareness for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It will be a non-uniform day for all students with a suggested £2 donation going towards the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. As well as raising awareness, students in years 7,8 & 9 have been selected to take part in the Restart a Heart campaign training.

Since joining the school I have always been incredibly proud by the way our students conduct themselves. There is no better feeling when this is spontaneously validated by the comments from external visitors, especially those who spend a lot of time in other schools in the area. I am happy to say that such validation was shared by a school photographer who commented on the polite, calm and friendly nature of our students during the process of taking photos of every one of them earlier this term.

As you can tell, it has been a very busy term so far and it shows no signs of abating.

Thank you as ever for your ongoing support and I would also like to publicly thank my staff for their hard work and dedication to ensuring that every student receives our very best, not only in terms of a quality education but also the wider enrichment we offer.

We hope you'll enjoy our new look Newsletter, which will serve as your next update.

MECE Matters should drop in your inbox this side of half term.

With best wishes,

Richard Hawthorne
Acting Head of School