



MAIDEN ERLEGH

CHILTERN EDGE

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Dear Parents and Guardians

Firstly, a very 'Happy Diwali' to all the members of the MECE family who will be celebrating this festival across this coming weekend.

I hope you've all had a good week. It feels slightly surreal at the moment; school life continues relatively normally despite the lockdown and we continue to be almost unaffected by Covid within our community (Our attendance has been around 96% this week), however, given that there have been cases in almost all the secondary schools surrounding MECE and also at Sonning Common Primary we feel like we are being circled! I must say I've been delighted at the very positive response of the students to the wearing of face coverings in inside areas of the school site. They have risen to the challenge and shown how responsible and mature they can be.

Can I use this opportunity to remind you that Monday 16th November is an INSET day so students should not come to school? We are using this day to work on developing our whole school reading and literacy strategy and also working with our middle leaders on our intervention strategies for students who fallen behind.

This week we had our first Parent Forum of the year. We had 19 parents log in to the event which was pleasing. Within this meeting we discussed our Quality Assurance programme and additionally our plans for any shutdown or partial shutdown. The matter of feedback came through from both the period of lockdown and also this term. The taking in of books is problematic in the current context but it is imperative that we ensure students understand how to improve and have the chance to improve, so we will make this a focus of the work we do moving forwards in this academic year.

Next week sees our first virtual Parents' Evening. The use of the School Cloud software has allowed us to engage parents in getting appointments more easily so I am delighted that as I write we have just under 75% of parents with appointments booked. The event next week is for Year 8 parents which because of the lockdown is their first full parents evening since they began at MECE. We moved the event in our calendar from after Easter to November to ensure that meaningful academic conversations can happen as soon as possible in the school year. I have my fingers crossed we can make the technology work after all this! (On dummy runs in the office it worked a treat).

Some of our most able students have been busy in the last two weeks. We are now well into our Brilliant Club programme and it is wonderful to watch some of our most gifted Year 9 and 10 students engaging with an Oxford University PhD student discussing the French Revolution and its causes and consequences. Alongside this we have some students participating in the Oxford University Model United Nations programme this weekend. These are both great opportunities and I am delighted by the students rising to these considerable academic challenges with such gusto.

Year 11 have just returned to us from their mock examinations (the importance of these papers may be greater than we first realised given this week's decision from Wales regarding the cancellation of next summer's examinations) and we now focus on their next steps. On

Thursday morning they had a live session dialled in from Henley College about the choices and possibilities available there. Next week sees them receive an assembly on apprenticeships and what they are and how they can be applied for. Year 11 is an exciting year and we want to ensure the students make the correct choices about what happens next which is why we are one of the few schools where all of our Year 11 students get a 1:1 interview with Adviza, the careers service.

On Wednesday I was very proud of the way the school commemorated Remembrance Day. Ms Hardman played the Last Post on her trumpet from the Quad followed by a two-minute silence. The students observed the silence impeccably and I think the event spoke volumes about our expectations, ethos and values that we are inculcating with the students.

I hope you can see we are continuing apace with our work in moving the school forwards despite the lockdown and the pandemic and the challenges it throws at us.

Finally, a big thank you to all the students and staff who wore colourful socks today for Children in Need. At the last count we have raised over £210. If you would like to donate via ParentPay, you still can.

Stay safe and take care



Andy Hartley
Headteacher