

Headteacher's Letter

December 2018

Dear Parent

As we approach the final days of this term, I write to remind you of our **Christmas Concert on Tuesday December 18th being held in St Peter's Church, Stockbridge from 7pm**. We do hope many of you will be able to join us.

The Test Valley PTA Christmas Raffle was drawn last week and my thanks again to the PTA team for all their hard work to organise this. I congratulate all those who were fortunate to win one of the prizes. The early forecast for funds raised are over £2000, which is a fantastic total. The PTA also ran a Christmas Jumper Film Night last week for Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils and it was lovely to see them enjoying this event.

Our newsletter for the Autumn Term is also about to be published and you can read more about the activities and experiences our pupils and staff have been involved in this term. This can be viewed later this week on our school website and paper copies are always available in school. We are now looking forward to our school production in February with rehearsals already underway. Further details will follow next term and we do hope you will book tickets to join us at one of the performances.

Arrangements for Thursday December 20th:

On the last day of term it will be normal lessons up until break-time for Years 10 and 11 pupils (Periods 1 - 2), whilst Years 7,8 and 9 pupils will continue until lunch-time (Periods 1 – 4). Pupils will be able to take part in a variety of activities for the remainder of the day. They should already know what the activities for their year group will be. Pupils do not need to wear school uniform for this day but should ensure their outfit is appropriate for their activities. If they have any questions about the arrangements for the day, they should ask their tutor or Year Co-ordinator. We will finish at 3.20pm as normal.

School Funding and the Swimming Pool

In my last letter I signalled the huge challenges we are facing, in common with many schools, to stretch our budget further. The Senior Team and Governing Body will undoubtedly face some difficult decisions going forward about what to prioritise and what we can afford. It has, however, been brought to my attention that in a current edition of a local parish magazine there is a reference to our swimming pool in a parish council report. This states that the local authority has approved plans from us to close the pool. I would wish to clarify that at this time the Governing Body has not yet made a final decision about the affordability of the pool in the future and we have certainly not submitted any plans for closure. I will of course inform parents should this change.

HEADTEACHER • MISS L HISCOCK B.ED (HONS)

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Staffing Update

We have been managing a higher than average staff absence this term due to illness. We realise this is far from ideal and has an impact on pupils' learning. Unfortunately this has been unavoidable on certain days. We are also not always able to plan ahead as the length of absence may be unknown and it has proved difficult to find specialist supply teachers to cover these absences consistently.

We appreciate that some parents are becoming increasingly concerned regarding Science due to the absence of staff. We have sought Science supply teachers whenever possible but there are currently few available and most are not looking for long-term placements. Going forward Mrs Collingridge has confirmed that sadly she will not be returning next term. Miss Boddington will also be leaving us and we send both our best wishes for the future. Mrs Arding is also reducing her hours next half term.

We have been actively recruiting for Science and have successfully appointed one teacher to start in January. We continue to advertise, although we know this is a subject area with national recruitment shortages. We are restructuring the Science timetable to be able to provide pupils, in particular Year 11, with coverage by Science teachers as much as possible. I am also in consultation with the local authority and other schools to 'buy in' additional specialist support to lead some key revision sessions with Year 11 later in the term. Ms Clarke (Head of Science) has also confirmed that after school and lunchtime sessions continue to be available to pupils. We will continue to do all we can to limit the impact on pupils.

Election of Parent-Governors

We still have two vacancies currently on our Governing Body for parent governors. My thanks for the potential interest shown in these roles. I will write to all parents again in January inviting applications for these important roles in our school. We would welcome your support by standing for these posts and joining a team working hard for the school going forward. If there are more applications than vacancies, an election will be held with all parents given the opportunity to vote.

Finally, I send you best wishes for the holidays and 2019. My thanks as always for your support this term. Our Spring Term starts on Monday January 7th at 8.50am for all pupils.

Yours Sincerely

L. Hiscock (Miss)
Headteacher