

Headteacher's Letter

March 2019

Dear Parent

I write to update you on our school news and key dates for the remainder of this term. These are as follows:

- Year 9 Pathways Evening: Thursday March 14th
- Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening: Thursday 28th March
- Last day of term: Friday 5th April (3.20pm)
- Return to school for start of Summer Term: Tuesday 23rd April (8.50am)

'Our Day Out' school production:

We were pleased that many of you were able to join us for one of the two performances in February. It was a lovely production, enjoyed by the audiences and those taking part each evening. We congratulate all who were involved both on the stage and behind the scenes for all their hard work to ensure the performances went well. Many thanks to Mrs Stubbs (Head of Arts) in particular for her commitment and enthusiasm to stage this production as well as the staff who supported her.

Charity Fundraising: Non-Uniform Day Friday 15th March

The Year 11 Charity Committee have asked for the above date to be a non-uniform day for pupils and staff to raise funds for Comic Relief and also a local charity, The Alex Lewis Trust. All pupils who would like to participate are asked to contribute at least £1 and we ask that you ensure their non-uniform choices are appropriate for a normal day at school

The Governing Body:

I am pleased to confirm the following appointments to our Governing Body as Parent-Governors. We are grateful to them for applying for these important roles in the school and look forward to working with them as parent representatives on our Governing Body:

- Mrs Marcel Van Doorn
- Mr Ben Howard

I also confirm that Mrs Hazel Lankester and Mr Nigel Melville have recently been appointed as Joint Chairs of the Governing Body. They can be contacted c/o of The Clerk to the Governing Body, Mrs Janine Emm, through the school email system.

HEADTEACHER • MISS L HISCOCK B.ED (HONS)

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Staffing News:

I wrote to parents at the end of January about the current staffing situation. We continue to do all we can to manage the ongoing vacancies in Science and we have kept parents informed by email of what we have put in place, including timetable changes and resources to support pupils' learning. Mr Callaway, an experienced Science teacher, has joined us part time this week and another full time teacher of Science is due to start after Easter. We also continue to seek specialist supply teachers, although it is difficult to find any seeking long term work in this area to date.

Mr Allsopp (Head of Technology) is currently still absent and his lessons continue to be covered by a specialist supply teacher.

We are also now planning ahead with regard to recruitment for known and anticipated vacancies next year and seeking to go out to advert and appoint as early as possible.

Education for Drug Mis-use:

There are growing concerns nationally about the social use of a variety of drugs by increasing numbers of young people. This is undoubtedly a concern for parents and an issue faced by all secondary schools, bringing with it the increasing risk of drugs being brought into schools. Managing this is as much about effective drugs education for pupils as having a clear policy in place if specific concerns are reported.

I would assure you that we continue to be very vigilant and follow up any concerns brought to our attention. We have also asked to be involved in a new schools' initiative already piloted in some Hampshire schools working together with the local police to raise pupils' awareness further of the risks and dangers of drug use. I will advise you if we are able to be part of this going forward.

School Funding Issues:

I wanted to provide you with an update on current issues relating to school funding. As a school, we are already having to make difficult decisions in relation to our own school budget. You have recently received a letter from our Governing Body regarding the future of our swimming pool. I fully understand this has raised considerable concern for some parents and a number of you have contacted the Governing Body in response. Mr Melville and Mrs Lankester (Joint Chairs) are addressing the correspondence received regarding this.

You will be aware from the news that a large number of Headteachers have been lobbying the Government and the Department of Education to review school funding. Headteachers, including myself, are so concerned about the level of funding and

resource we receive to be able to deliver the level of provision and support that is expected and that our families and children deserve. These issues are not just affecting our school and the levels of concern amongst headteachers is widespread.

Headteachers continue to recognise that there is not a 'bottomless pit' of money and want to be constructively involved in overcoming the current funding issues in schools. In the meantime:

- class sizes are rising and the curricular offer is being restricted
- schools are being asked increasingly to support with children's emotional health and well-being without the resource to meet a growing need
- schools are struggling to provide the levels of support for the pupils who need it most.

There is already widespread support from parents nationally to improve school funding levels. I encourage you to consider making representation yourself to your own local MP and the Department of Education if willing to do so. In the meantime, we continue to do all we can as a school to provide the best level of provision we can for our pupils, your children.

Headteacher's Coffee Morning Tuesday 26th March 9.15-10.00am

My next coffee morning is on the above date and it would be lovely if you are able to join me for this informal opportunity to meet.

Spring Term Newsletter:

Our newsletter for this term will be published shortly for you to read about the activities and experiences our pupils and staff have been involved in this term. This can be viewed on our school website and paper copies are always available in school. We also plan to re-start our blog on the website soon to share and celebrate school news again on a weekly basis.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Hiscock
Headteacher