

Embed confidence; fuel ambition.

12 December 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of our first term, I would like to thank you for your continued support of the school and our staff. As always, we have been working hard to improve all our students' attainment and engagement and I hope your child has shared with you the skills, knowledge and confidence he/she is gaining at school.

I recommend that you take a moment to visit our website to read about just some of the activities in which our students have been involved.

End of term arrangements

Students will finish school at 12.30pm on Friday 16 December. The diners will be available to provide lunches (sandwiches, pasta, fruit and other cold lunch choices) to students who would like to eat before they leave. Students eligible to free school meals will, of course, be provided with lunch. If your child wishes to have lunch at school, please ask him/her to tell the Head of Year.

Friday 16 December is also festive jumper day (non-uniform), when we will be raising money for Save The Children. In return for a £1 charity donation on the day, students (and staff) may wear a festive jumper and non-uniform.

Winter Festival

You and your family and friends are warmly invited to join us at our Winter Festival from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 14 December. The evening offers a variety of crafts, entertainment, games and some festive favourites: mince pies, mulled wine and carols around the tree. Tickets are £2.00 and available from Mrs Rushton and Miss Mitchell in Music and Drama. All proceeds go towards future events for the school. We look forward to welcoming you at this fabulous seasonal event.

The rest of my letter highlights a few key dates for your diary and some important information for the new year.

Parent Consultation Evenings

The subject specific consultation evenings provide a valuable opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress. If you are unable to attend, please get in touch with your child's Head of Year to arrange an alternative time to come into school.

Tuesday 24 January: Year 10 target setting evening from 5.00pm

Thursday 2 February: Year 12 and 13 partnership Parents' Evening at Ralph Thoresby School

Tuesday 7 February: Year 9 Parent Consultation Evening from 5.00pm until 7.00pm

Wednesday 1 March: Year 12 Parent Consultation Evening from 5.00pm until 7.00pm

Thursday 16 March: Year 10 Parent Consultation Evening from 5.00pm until 7.00pm

Wednesday 29 March: Year 8 Parent Consultation Evening from 5.00pm until 7.00pm

Tuesday 2 May: Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening from 5.00pm until 7.00pm

Year 9 Options Evening: Wednesday 18 January

Parents of Year 9 students are invited to our Year 9 Options Evening on Wednesday 18 January from 5.00pm until 7.00pm. This is an important event for the students as it will offer an overview of your child's study choices for Years 10 and 11.

Other events and deadlines

Week commencing 12 December: Year 7 reports will be posted home

Wednesday 14 December: Christmas lunch in the diners

Monday 2 January: Bank Holiday (school closed)

Tuesday 3 January: start of half term 3

Tuesday 3 January: mock exams begin for Year 11 and Year 12 (for two weeks)

Tuesday 7 February: Supporting Effective Revision - a how to guide for parents and carers from 6.30pm until 7.30pm

Friday 10 February: end of half term 3

Monday 20 February: start of half term 4

21-23 February: Annie! Save the date for our fabulous musical production!

Improving students' resilience in their learning

Since October half term, we have been focussing on improving students' resilience and independent learning. To support this, we have introduced, where appropriate, a period of silent work in each lesson. This also allows for extended writing and for students to develop their own thoughts. Class teachers explain the purpose of the silent working to ensure students are prepared for that time.

Since this approach was introduced, we have seen a positive impact on resilience and learning in lessons.

Mobile phones and earphones

In our continued efforts to ensure a purposeful learning environment, with immediate effect next term, students will not be allowed to have mobile phones, earphones or any similar technology visible anywhere on the school site. If a member of staff sees a student with a phone or similar, the equipment will be confiscated on the spot and made available for the student to collect from student reception at the end of the school day. However, if the student has equipment confiscated for a third time, we will not return it to him/her but will write to you, asking you to contact the Year Manager and make arrangements to come into school to collect it. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

School expectations

Our vision is to create systems that lead to a highly disciplined school that enables us to focus on learning to the greatest extent possible. We believe that high standards of behaviour and uniform are entirely compatible with a friendly, happy, relaxed school and form the platform for high expectations of academic achievement.

You will see below our expectations of students in classrooms and elsewhere on site. I trust you will find them useful for reference.

Expectations in the classroom

- Arrive on time for the start of the lesson – fully equipped and ready to learn
- Wear correct full school uniform at all times unless directed by the teacher
- Follow the school and specific classroom routines / seating plan
- Respond promptly to the signal for attention
- Listen in silence when others are speaking
- Follow instructions from teaching staff when they are given
- Have full equipment for learning positioned on the desk
- Focus fully on work and do nothing that prevents others from learning
- No mobile phones, music players and headphones

Expectations in social spaces

- Wear correct full school uniform at all times
- Ensure coats are carried and not worn if inside buildings
- Walk purposefully without running
- Use private voices without shouting

Expectations in social spaces (cont)

- Follow the instructions of all members of staff
- Do not eat, drink or chew inside the buildings other than in designated areas
- Don't have unnecessary physical contact with other students
- Put litter in bins
- No mobile phones, music players and headphones

Detentions

Thank you for your support of our system of issuing same day one hour detention to students who fail to meet our expectations. Detention is held every school day in the main school hall, supervised by several members of staff, from 2.45pm until 3.45pm.

Since the introduction of this detention, we have seen a significant, positive impact on punctuality, a reduction in low level disruption in lessons and a general improvement in students' conduct around school.

Parent Governor ballot

We are seeking a new parent governor and, to that end, in my letter to you earlier this term, we invited nominations. We received four nominations so, as we have just one vacancy, we need to hold a secret ballot of parents. I have enclosed the information and ballot paper(s) you need to place your vote.

I urge you to vote – our governing body is important and every member has the opportunity to contribute significantly to the progress of our school and students.

Parents' online engagement app

I am pleased to let you know that we have recently installed MyEd on our website. MyEd is a free app, designed to give you a multitude of communication and information features to stay in touch with what is going on at school. The app gives you direct access to your child's attendance, timetable, absence records, achievements, behaviour and much more. You will also see that we update and change the information in the app as the school year moves along.

To access MyEd on your Android or IOS device, go to www.myedschoolapp.com and download the appropriate app for your device.

For more information about MyEd, how to access it and what information you will be given access to, please click on the icon at the bottom of the home page on our school website.

Finally, thank you again for your continued support. I wish you and your family a happy and peaceful end of term break and look forward to welcoming all our students back in January.

Yours faithfully



Mrs J Bell
Headteacher