

December 2020

Headlines

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to start by saying a huge thank you to everyone who has donated a present for the Swindon toy appeal. Your generosity and compassion are amazing, particularly at this time when many people are struggling financially. The toys were delivered to Gateway church on Thursday and are sure to bring hope and happiness to many children and their parents this Christmas.

Christmas card winners

We wish to congratulate our 2020 Christmas card competition winners: the winning card which has been printed and sent out to our local businesses and schools was designed by Sophia Childs 8OS1. The design was ingenious containing bar codes which on scanning take the recipient to our school website! Equally as stunning was the card designed by Erin Summerhill 7KBA which will be used by Mrs Bareham to send to colleagues. Worthy runners up were Sahlan Irshad 8OSA and Dylan Ashworth 7OS1. The standard of entries this year was incredible with many inventive and highly creative designs. Well done to everyone who took part.

Wacky Wednesday

To make up for the fact that we are unable to have our House Christmas dinners this year, and to have some much-needed fun, we will be holding a Christmas sports competition throughout the day on Wednesday 16 December for Years 7 – 10. All students in Years 7 – 10 need to come in their PE kit on this day. Year 11 will be taking part on Tuesday 15 December when the majority of the year group have PE, to avoid missing lessons.

The competition will take place during the following lessons; students will need their equipment for their other lessons during the day.

Period 1 – Year 9

Period 2 – Year 10

Period 3 – Year 7

Period 4 – Year 8

Prelims assembly

Year 11 will be receiving their prelim exam results on Wednesday 16 December. This is an opportunity for them to experience what it will feel like collecting their results in August and also, to highlight gaps in learning so that they can be addressed before the real exams. Please encourage your child, whatever their results, to use the outcome positively, to either continue working to the best of their ability or to spur them into action while they still have time to make a difference.

Staff leaving

Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to two members of staff this Christmas: firstly, Mr Welger, who is retiring after having worked at Dorcan for 19 years, both as a teacher and then as a teaching assistant and intervention tutor; and secondly, we are also very sad to be losing Miss McMahon, our amazing Head of Maths who is re-locating to Devon. Miss McMahon has transformed the maths department over

the past three years which has resulted in Maths results improving significantly and showing positive progress.

We are also temporarily saying goodbye to Mrs Hodges who is going on maternity leave; we wish her all the best as she brings a new life into the world.

We are delighted that we have appointed two specialist teachers as replacements: Mr Brown as our new Head of Maths and Mr Roke as a Drama teacher. Interviews are being held for a new Teaching Assistant this Friday.

Last day arrangements

There has been a last-minute change to our last day arrangements; you may have heard that the government have advised just this week that schools finish on **Thursday 17 December** to allow for any track and tracing responsibility by school staff to be completed by Christmas Eve. The Full Governing body have agreed that Friday 18 December will now become a designated training day. I appreciate that this change is short notice and apologise if this causes you any inconvenience.

We will be replicating what would have been the last day of term on the Friday, to the Thursday and are planning some festive fun. Students may, if they wish, bring a charitable donation of £1 and wear non-school uniform. It would be great if they could embrace the Christmas spirit by wearing a Christmas jumper or/and face mask! Although this is a non-school uniform day, please make sure your child is sensible in their choice of clothing and jewellery. During the morning students will be taking part in a whole school Christmas pub quiz and other festive activities and all students will finish early as is our usual custom to allow you to begin your Christmas celebrations.

To allow for social distancing, Years 10 and 11 will leave at **11:45am** out of their respective gates. Year 9 will leave at **11:50am** and Years 7 and 8 at **12:00** midday.

Please be aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

Where a student or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than **48** hours since being in school, the school should **not** be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

For the first **6** days after teaching ends, if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms **within 48** hours of being in school, the school has been asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

School staff will not be on-call or conduct any contact tracing more than **6** days after the final day of teaching. Therefore, there will be no pupil contact tracing beyond Wednesday 23 December.

Extra-curricular activities

Please note that due to Year 11 and Year 8 Parents' evenings which are being held virtually, after school clubs will not run on Thursday 14 January 2021 and Thursday 4 February 2021.

In order to support all our GCSE students, we are now running voluntary after school 'Clinics' for Y10 and Y11. These take place in a classroom, with access to computers for those who prefer a quiet place to work in school or need internet access. The sessions are being run by Mrs Abbott, a maths teacher, and Raising Aspirations Leader who will offer help with:

- - Maths homework and revision
- - General revision skills and organisation
- - CV writing
- - College applications and course choices

The Year 10 sessions are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:10pm – 4pm in T3/4

The Year 11 sessions are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3:10pm – 4pm in T3/4.

The room is Covid cleaned before students arrive in a different bubble has been in the room previously.

Rewards

Currently the House totals are:

- Osprey: 27,329
- Kingfisher: 27,018
- Falcon: 22,962
- Eagle: 21,528

Don't forget to keep earning those house points.

Finally, please ensure that your child does not do anything over the holidays which is against our uniform policy and cannot be rectified in time for the start of term. Please see the website for information about what is deemed to be acceptable.

Please be reminded that Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January are INSET days, though some Year 11 students may be invited in for exam preparation or coursework completion. We wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing everyone again on Wednesday 6th January 2021.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham