

Monday 18th March 2024

Dear parents and carers,

We are fast approaching the end of the shortest half term of the year as a very early Easter looms. It is a short but busy half term here in school, with all sorts of things happening.

A couple of our teaching staff are currently not in school as they are recovering from significant illnesses. I am sure you will join me in sending these members of staff our best wishes. In order to cover for this absence, we have invested in additional staffing in the subjects affected and recruited experienced colleagues to teach the classes affected.

We will see some disruption and a few room changes in science during the final few days of this half term, as builders begin work on some much needed and long overdue refurbishment in one of our science labs. We were delighted to receive funding for this, following a bid we submitted as Embark. We are looking forward to seeing our students back in this lab as soon as possible and accessing their learning in a space more akin to the 21st century.

It has been a pleasure to see so many of you in school this year. 89% of families were able to attend one or other of the Parents' Evenings for Year 11 students in 2023-24, and we are looking forward to welcoming those of you with connections to our Sixth Form back into school for your next Parents' Evening on Thursday. Those of you with children in Years 7, 8 and 10 will have Parents' Evenings when we return after Easter. The dates for these are as follows; Year 7 Thursday 18th April, Year 8 Thursday 25th April, Year 10 Thursday 9th May. These events are incredibly useful in providing feedback and enabling conversation. Thank you for all you continue to do as we work together to provide the best we can for the children and young adults in our care.

Our inaugural Careers Week for students in Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) went really well, and we were pleased by the way our younger students were able to benefit from the opportunities this week brought them. We are looking forward to our already well established Year 10 Careers week, which will take place during the week of 29th April.

Excitement is growing amongst many of our younger students for the trip to Disneyland Paris which sets off in a few days time. It is good to see this type of experience balanced against the work being done by other students, in partnership with the Crich Tramway Museum, which is focusing on the impact of Apartheid in South Africa. Two AGS Sixth Form students were selected to be part of an international group of students which visited Auschwitz last week and they will now lead work with their fellow students back in school, helping to expand knowledge and understanding.

I am very pleased to see opportunities for our students to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities (OAA) growing once again. We were delighted to purchase six canoes and a trailer, just

after we took delivery of our two new mini-buses. These, alongside a specialist OAA instructor who works in school one day each week, will help lots of students develop their range of skills.

Local links, which were forced to take a backward step during the pandemic, are being re-established and are growing once again. We are proud to be able to offer our students the chance to benefit from links such as the ones we have with Wirksworth-based Young Futures, St Mary's, Waltham House and Aquabox. We are very pleased to be welcoming Theresa Peltier into school again on Thursday. Theresa lives locally and has been a major advocate for children and young people during her year in office as Derbyshire's High Sheriff.

Every young person in Year 11 will have had the opportunity for a 1:1 talk with a senior member of staff before we finish this term. These conversations have focussed on the options each student has for the future and will have offered some advice and guidance about next steps and how to make the most from the time remaining this year. We will be having similar conversations with our Year 9 students in the next few weeks, as they plan for their move into Key Stage 4. Meanwhile, our oldest students, those in Years 12 and 13, are continuing to benefit from the conversations being had with their teachers, tutors and mentors, as they too look to get the most out of the rest of this academic year, with at least one eye firmly focused on the future.

Yours sincerely,



Malcolm Kelly

Headteacher