



01 April 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

As I started to write this letter, I had just returned from one of the most joyful school evenings since the outbreak of the pandemic. On a very cold Wednesday evening, our U16 girls' football team treated us to a thrilling display to win the County Cup Final at Cheshunt Football Stadium. Their spirit of team work and enjoyment was infectious and reminded us all of how important these events and activities are and how much we have missed them. Along with the inevitable 'Sweet Caroline' there was a lot of 'It's coming home' (mainly from the PE department).

It seems almost impossible to think that, two years ago, we were entering our first period of lockdown and remote education! Two years on and, whilst we are still battling high numbers of Covid cases, there has been much to enjoy and celebrate as school life continues on the road back to 'normality'. This half-term we have been able to resume parts of school life we used to take for granted such as assemblies, extended learning days and extra-curricular activities.

The football final has been just one amongst an array of recent events which have provided memorable experiences and fantastic results - in athletics, cross country, netball, football, rugby and basketball. On a related theme, it has been great to see our Sports Leaders back hard at work in the community this term, with the summer bringing opportunities for Years 7 and 8 to join the programme. The return of the school choir and orchestra has been another highlight.

Similarly our Sixth Form and Year 7 Equality Ambassadors have been working hard in focus groups and we will look to recruit students from other year groups to extend their remit in the new term.

Of course, our day-to-day work has continued to focus on ensuring we build on the learning undertaken - the buzz of a more 'unrestricted' style of classroom activity has been heartening to see and hear. Our students' determination to learn, do their best and be resilient in the face of the challenges they have experienced can be seen in the number of reward points issued this year. We are currently close to 100,000 reward points issued for the year to date, an increase of 10% on the same period last year - and it is particularly pleasing to see so many of these related to the new Growth Mindset merit categories.

Resilience and determination have been evident in the approach of our examination years. I'd like to say 'well done' to Year 11 for their excellent attendance at Session 6 and Elevate sessions and look forward to seeing those accessing the Easter revisions sessions next week. Their hard work and commitment to achieve their best is commendable.

Our Year 13 students are equally determined and I'd like to take the opportunity to remind all our examination students to use the Easter break wisely - to strike the right balance between rest and work so they are well prepared for their upcoming exams.

I am sure you will want to join me in thanking the staff for their incredible efforts over the past term. Increasing Covid cases have continued to provide challenges, but the school community has pulled together to minimise the impact on daily school life. Thanks also go to the ASA and Governors for their continued support and guidance. We are very fortunate to have such a strong school community.

At the end of term, we often say goodbye to valued friends and colleagues. This term, we say farewell to Ms Fry (Teaching Assistant), Ms Mellor (Teacher of Spanish) and Mrs Ghalichi-Tabriz (Head of Computer Science). We wish them all the very best in their new endeavours. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Lowe for her tremendous work as Head of Science over the last 14 years. We're grateful that her 'semi-retirement' will enable her to remain part of the team as a Teacher of Physics from next term.

When we return, we have so many things to look forward to: summer sports fixtures, activity days/trips concerts, ASA Ashlyns Festival, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions - and, I hope, a little sunshine! We also look forward to welcoming new staff, Mr Beattie (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs Gunton (Head of Science), Miss Matthews (Teacher of MFL) and Miss Tan (Teaching Assistant).

As we head into the Easter holiday, our community is encouraged to be kind and stay healthy by following simple steps to live life safely with Covid. The latest Hertfordshire information can be found here: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/covidliving>.

I'd like to once again thank you for your continued support.

We wish you a safe, happy and restful break and look forward to welcoming students back to school for the Summer Term at 8:35am on Tuesday 19 April.

Yours sincerely



James Shapland
Headteacher