

Our Ref: DWt/LPu

19th July 2024

Dear Parent/Carers,

Thank you to all who have supported and challenged us this year. As I have said many times, it is a partnership between you, us and the young people. You have chosen us for a reason, and we take the faith you have put in us very seriously. You only get one chance at education and together we can increase the life chances of all, but only together. You may not always agree with the decisions that are made, but they are made with the best possible intentions and in the best interests of our young people.

Lots of smiles yesterday whilst returning from the many rewards trips that took place as well as the on-site activities. Well done to all who had to endure that long and slow journey back from Chessington yesterday, not easy on a hot and stuffy coach but all coped admirably. Important we celebrate together, as the school days should be the best of your life.

So much has been going on since I last wrote. With some Year 9 youngsters visiting Essex University so that they have another option to explore after they leave us. The more support we can give those who could be the first in their family to go to university the better. I was the first in my family to go to university and looking back I really wasn't given much help at all. The sooner we start think about university as an option the more likely it is to happen. Stars on the Stage was a huge success on Wednesday evening with our Creative Arts Faculty leading the way and providing much needed for funds to support battling cancer in the process. Thank you to all involved and all who supported.

Today there are many events taking place at lunchtime as we always do at the end of a busy term. From penalty shoot-outs, and volleyball, to singing, busking, play your card right, rock band and so much more. Always good to send all off with a bit of fun as the summer holidays begin.

A reminder that it is normal full school uniform today, other that it being a non-blazer day, and that we finish at 12.30pm.

Timings of the school day today

8.40am-9.00am -Tutor
9.00am-10.00am - Period 1
10.00am-11.00am - Period 2
11.00am-11.30am - Break/Lunch
11.30am-12.30pm - Period 3
12.30pm end of school day

Dates for your diary:

A reminder that as well as below the school calendar is on our website and you can follow us on X, Facebook and Instagram:

Thursday 22nd August – 8.00am-9.30am. Year 11 GCSE Results Day

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Tuesday 3rd September – 8.35am. Year 7 and Year 11 Prefects return for new academic year.

Wednesday 4th September – 8.35am. All Year groups start the new academic year.

Thursday 5th September – 6.00pm-8.00pm Year 7 Family Information Evening.

Friday 6th September – 9.05am-10.50am. Prospective Year 6 tours of the school with me.

Home Learning – Miss White

You will be aware that this academic year, we have reviewed our Home Learning provision aiming to not only support the development of deep, cumulative understanding, but also encourage pupils to use this knowledge to exercise higher order thinking skills. The programme consists of two key strands:

1. **RAW (Retrieval at Woodlands)** tasks which builds cumulative knowledge and supports memory retrieval using the Tassomai app.
2. **RAPID Progress** tasks which encourage pupils to use and apply the knowledge they have learnt.

RAW/Tassomai

RAW Knowledge has been in place for a couple of years and has become part of the Woodlands School culture, and we are proud to announce that **Woodlands are the Tassomai National Champions with pupils having completed 5 million more questions this academic year than the school ranked in second place. In total, since September 2023, 15,390,746 questions were answered, 683,941 corrections were made, and pupils spent an additional 47,111 additional hours learning!** This is an incredible achievement for our school community.

RAPID Progress

Across the year, we have been engaging in Action Research with Middle Leaders to design a home learning curriculum which complements our RAW Knowledge provision. Our intention has been to ensure that home learning is set consistently across the school, is easy to understand, and offers pupils a range of different tasks to prepare them for later academic and professional success. Year 7 and 8 parents & carers will be aware that we have been trialling **RAPID Progress** home learning tasks this half term, with home learning being set under the model:

Revise or rehearse - Pupils may be asked to recall knowledge or repeat skills.

Apply -Pupils may be asked to select and apply their collective understanding of the subject to complex/multi-step problems/questions.

Prepare - Pupils may be asked to conduct some reading/research to prepare them for a lesson.

Improve - Pupils may be asked to improve or redraft a piece of previously completed work.

Design - Pupils may be asked to demonstrate their understanding by designing a creative piece.

Following consultation with all stakeholders, it is clear that the trial has been successful and as such, will continue in September with some minor amendments. As expectations for home learning differ slightly according to year group, parents and carers have been sent a letter detailing the home learning arrangements for their child come September.

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We recognise that parents and carers play a key role in encouraging pupils to complete their home learning and are appreciative of your support. We look forward to continuing to work with you moving forward to ensure our Home Learning provision supports pupils in their academic journey.

Safeguarding – Mr Riste

As the academic year draws to a close, I want to thank all parents, carers and families for their collaboration in working together to ensure that every member of the community is safe. This is essential for our young people to thrive in a nurturing environment where barriers to learning and engagement are removed.

Safeguarding, by nature, does not always fit into the confines of the academic calendar, therefore I wanted to draw your attention to the school website for useful links and sources of support as well as remind you that as DSL I can be contacted by email. Alternatively, you can also contact the Essex Children and Families Hub on 0345 603 7627 directly for instances where there are concerns for a young person's safety and wellbeing.

[Kooth \(Click Here\)](#)

Online counselling and support for all Young People.

[Internet Matters - Parental Controls \(Click Here\)](#)

A useful site that supports parents to put appropriate controls on phones, tablets and laptops.

[ThinkUKnow \(Click Here\)](#)

A website that provides information and advice on online relationships.

[Disrespect Nobody \(Click Here\)](#)

A campaign to help young people understand what a healthy relationship looks like.

Creative Arts – Mrs Brown

Thank you so much to everyone who supported Wednesday night's Talent Show – Stars on Stage. The evening was a fantastic success with such a great atmosphere. The Artistic Performance Team pupils ran the entire show and every one of them did their jobs so well. The pupils always love seeing so many staff, parents and carers in the audience so thank you to all who came.

The standard of performances was so high that the judges struggled to choose but, the winners were:-

3rd place- Cory H, Megan B, Lyla A, Charlie B, Dylan M & Evie R in a devised drama piece.

2nd place- Quinn B, Chrisette E and Rio A who performed *Before he cheats* as a band.

1st place- Ellie-May O who performed a solo tap dance.

The pupils were awarded a range of vouchers which were donated to us from different local companies. Thank you to everyone that supported with this also.

Overall, we raised a fantastic **£500.00 for Cancer Research UK!!**

Literacy – Mrs Handford

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents for their support with all literacy-based activities from encouraging your child to bring a book to school to sponsoring our reading to

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donating books. All your support really is appreciated. The total raised for our sponsored read was £200.28 - very well done to all pupils involved! I would like to congratulate Ema K in Year 7 and Kaiden P in Year 8 for all their hard work on the sponsored read; they did an incredible job. I will be speaking to them both today to organise their prizes.

This half term's winners of the £10.00 book vouchers are Amile F (Year 7), Samuel H (Year 8) and Vinnie T (Year 9). I hope they all find a fabulous book to enjoy.

DEAR time for the first half-term of next academic year is as follows:

Monday 16th September - period 1
Monday 23rd September - period 2
Monday 30th September - period 3
Monday 7th October - period 4
Monday 14th October - period 5
Tuesday 22nd October - period 1

However, all pupils in Years 7 to 9 should have a reading book with them *every day* as part of their essential equipment.

Years 7, 8 and 9 have all done a reading age test within the past couple of weeks. If you would like your child's reading age, please feel free to email me vha@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk

You may have heard of the "summer slide", the summer learning loss. Of course, it is important for our pupils to relax and rest during the summer break, but did you know that just 2 to 3 hours of reading per week can help avoid the summer slide? Not only that, but reading is a great way to boost emotional wellbeing. My aim is to read 12 books this summer. I set our pupils a challenge. How many books can you read? Come and see me in September to tell me! Parents, I extend that challenge to you too...how many can you read?

Cultural Capital – Mrs Heseltine – Assistant Head Teacher (Cultural Capital)

Post-16 – Mrs Robertson

Following on from the assembly this week; when our current Year 10 pupils return as Year 11's in September they will begin their 1:1 interviews with our careers service Directions. I went through with Year 10 this week how they should be preparing for these, and it would be prudent over the summer if pupils start to look into post-16 destination options and course choices, as well as their entry requirements against their predicted grades ahead of Year 11 to ensure they not only know what they are aiming for but make the most out of their Directions interview.

Should you require any help please do not hesitate to contact me via email on kro@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk

Careers across the Curriculum – Mrs Robertson

Exciting news! The careers page on our website is currently being developed to allow more up to date information and guidance to be given to our pupils, you as parents, and the employers that we work with. You will be able to access information about careers in the current labour market and

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have access to a range of support materials that enable you to navigate career paths with your child to help prepare them for jobs in the future, including within the world of AI.

A link to this page will be included in September's edition of the newsletter.

Enrichment Opportunities: Extra-Curricular Activities and Pupil Leadership Roles – Mrs Heseltine

Another amazing year for our pupils at Woodlands, with over 60 clubs and 25 Pupil Leadership Roles to choose from we end the year on a high with 300 of our pupils taking on a leadership role, and over 500 pupils signing up to our clubs!

We have noticed that as pupils get higher up the school their attendance to clubs starts to waiver, but I cannot urge you enough to encourage your child to keep their extra-curricular enrichment interests up. Not only do they support with mental wellbeing during exam years but fill your child's Cultural Capital wallet with the 'something extra' that in addition to their qualifications and behaviours, make your child stand out from the rest.

Did you know that a third of the application form for a post-16 placement in a sixth form is dedicated to their extra-curricular activities? Make sure that when your child reaches the application stage at the end of Year 10 and the start of Year 11, they still have something to put in this section.

We do not rest on our laurels, and we do not expect our pupils to either; we are ready to go again in September with clubs and Pupil Leadership Roles. Our Autumn programme has lots of new additions and is linked below:

[Autumn Term Clubs Timetable 2024.25](#)

Both clubs and Pupil Leadership Roles come with an ePraise salary which rewards regular attendance and a commitment to the role.

[Enrichment Opportunities Page \(Clubs, Pupil Leadership Roles, Trips/Visits links\)](#)

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Throughout this year 38 Year 9 pupils were successful in their application and selection process onto the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupil attended weekly meetings and activities after school, and in addition to this gave up over 40 hours of their own time to complete the 'skill', 'physical' and 'volunteering' aspects of the programme. This was an impressive feat for each and every one of our pupils and showed real strength of character.

Along their DofE journey our pupils embodied every aspect of our AROE ethos and relentlessly strived to complete their three aspects ahead of their expedition.

Unfortunately, as I wrote in an earlier newsletter, we could not complete the expeditions with the pupils. We knew that this would be devastating news for our pupils, but their safety will always come first. Again, our pupils rose to the challenge and carried themselves with grace and dignity despite their disappointment.

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Essex Youth Service have been a big support to the school and our pupils, reassuring them that all their hard work had not been in vain. The three elements our pupils have completed or were working on so far will be stored on their eDofE accounts for 10 years, enabling them to compete the expedition with a different provider at any one time. It has been amazing to see the pupils still working towards these three areas despite the cancellation of the expedition.

In recognition of these pupils, their hard work and commitment we have decided to award them the 'Cultural Capital' badge, the highest honour in the school, reserved normally for pupils who achieve gold in all four AROE strands of ePraise, of which there has been two so far.

Pupils received their badge along with their certificate and a letter of achievement in an assembly with their peers on Monday. To say that I am incredibly proud of these pupils is an understatement. Well done to: Azra, Jana, Olayemi, Charlie B, Shay, Joshua B, Archie B, Ashton C, Lorin, Aida, Hannah F, Callum G, Edward, April, Ryan H, Mahasin, Logan J, Mitchell, Isabella, Chiamaka, Mercy, Fawwaz, Jodie, Daniel P, Mason, Kaelan, Harry P, Logan S, Rizwana, Max, Robyn, Maliha, Lilly T, Riley T, Teddy, Emma W, Holly W, Cosmin.

AROE Curriculum Lessons – Miss Ash

Please ensure that you have checked the AROE lesson Parental Communication Calendar for pupils' return in September half term to familiarise yourselves with the topics due to be covered:

[AROE Parental Communication Calendar](#)

Year 7 – Transition and Safety

Year 8 – Drugs and Alcohol

Year 9 – Peer Influence, Substance Use and Gangs

Year 10 – Work Experience

Year 11 – Next Steps

All information regarding how we deliver Relationships, Sex and health in AROE lessons can be found here: [RSHE Policy](#)

[RSE Parental Right to withdraw form](#)

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email has@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk should you have any queries/concerns.

Notices

Laptops: A reminder has gone out this week to our Year 11 leavers; if you were loaned a laptop or PC from the school, you must return it to Mr Roberts in the atrium on Thursday 22nd August prior to

getting your GCSE results. Mr Roberts will also be accepting any pre-loved uniform, including blazers and ties from our Year 11's on this day.

September 2024 uniform – a further reminder

From September 2024 our Woodlands skirt length will be on the knee. From September 2025 there will just be unbranded trousers and no skirts. Trousers would also need to be appropriate, plain

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black, tailored, no cords, no skinny trousers, no leggings, no studied or zipped pockets or jeans, no shorts.

There will be now bows from September 2024, socks need to be either plain black or white with no logos on, as well as being below the knee. No hooded tops are to be in school or tracksuit tops.

Uniform promotes our ethos, provides a sense of belonging and identity, and sets an appropriate tone for education.

Thank you in advance for your support with this. The last thing we want is to get the new academic year off on a negative note by having frequent clashes over the length of the skirts and what you are and are not allowed. I have tried to give all as much notice and reasons for these changes, all we need now is to have every one of our youngsters leaving the house looking smart so each day can start with a positive interaction to get them in a good place to learn.

If there is to be any dying of hair, false nails or eyelashes, piercings and whatever else takes place that isn't part of our uniform over the summer, please can we ensure that all is sorted by the time we return. Again, we do not want to start off having arguments about why you shouldn't have this and that. We are a place of learning and to ensure that happens basic rules need to be followed.

Moving forward

It has been quite a year. It started with a fire and then much sadness losing two of our own. Ofsted quickly followed, and that got us to November. Our school is getting better day in day out because it is a partnership.

There will be new challenges ahead and bumps in the road along the way. We are always stronger together.

From September I will be slimming down this letter to focus on the key areas rather than repeated details. Hopefully just as relevant but a little clearer.

Do enjoy time with family and friends and I look forward to seeing you all nice and fresh in September.

Best wishes,



Mr David Wright
Head Teacher