

## From the Headteacher - 24 January 2025

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Dear Parents

### **GCSE Trials**

On behalf of our team of invigilators, I would like to pass on much-deserved praise to our Year 11 students, who have navigated their GCSE trial examinations over the last two weeks; pupils have shown great determination and maturity in what can be a stressful period. Year 11 subject teachers are now hard at work marking mock papers, and pupils will initially receive feedback in lessons over the coming weeks. Mock results will be published on Parent Gateway before the end of this half term.

As I mentioned before the examination period, the feedback pupils will now receive should give clear guidance on their next steps for preparing for the summer examinations. This will include specific topic areas that may need greater attention, subject specific skills that need further clarification, whilst also reminding pupils to put their revision to the test as often as possible using the available past papers and mark schemes for each subject. The key message to our Year 11 pupils is that time is still very much on their side, and much can still be achieved with continued hard work and reaching out for support.

### **Sixth Form Open Evening**

A reminder that our Sixth Form Open Evening takes place on Thursday 30 January. All Year 11 students and parents are, of course, invited; there will be an introductory talk at 6.00pm and 7.00pm in the main hall, followed by the opportunity to visit departments and A Level subject teachers. Many of our current Sixth Form students will also be on hand during the evening to speak about A Level study from their point of view.

As always with our Open Evenings, we will endeavour to park as many visitors on our school site as possible. However, due to it not being possible to park cars on our field at this time of year, it may be the case that you are directed to park in the local area. If this is the case, a polite reminder to park with due consideration of our neighbours.

### **Parent Survey Results and the Listening Post**

Thank you once again to all parents who took the time to complete the recent parent survey, which was carried out by Kirkland Rowell before Christmas. Miss Tapscott (Deputy Headteacher) will be emailing the outcomes of the survey to all parents next week.

Miss Tapscott will also be in touch to update parents about a new addition to our pastoral care support called *The Listening Post*. This is designed to be an anonymous reporting tool for pupils to report issues of concern to ensure that support, either directly or indirectly, can be actioned. Further details will be also be given to pupils next week.

### **Careers Fayre**

Our annual Careers Fayre takes place on Tuesday next week, with 45 companies and 28 universities coming to the School to provide information to pupils from Year 9 upwards. There will also be a number of higher education talks for our Year 11 and 12 students. This event always proves to be an excellent opportunity for pupils to find out more about their future career aspirations, or to help them start to consider their plans for the first time. My sincere thanks go to Mrs Manning (Head of Careers) and Mrs Morris (Head of Higher Education) for all the hard work that goes into the planning and setting up an event of this scale.

### **Year 9 Options Evening**

Further to Mr Dempsey's email last week, a reminder to our Year 9 parents that the GCSE options evening takes place online on Monday 3 February. Mr Tilley (Head of Year 11 and Assistant Timetabler) will talk parents through the process of selecting GCSE options, along with guidance on how your son might choose the most appropriate subjects to match his interests, abilities and potential career aspirations.

### ***We Will Rock You***

Rehearsals are progressing well for our whole school production of *We Will Rock You*, which is being performed on Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 February. The cast and crew, together with Mrs Roberts (Head of Drama) and Mrs Webb (Sixth Form Administrator), have been rehearsing almost daily, including weekends, for what promises to be a very entertaining performance. It has also been great to see the set and staging come together in recent days, with huge thanks to our Design Department, Art Department and Site Team. It goes without saying that tickets are selling fast, and can be purchased [online](#).

### **Extracurricular**

Congratulations must go to the Chess Team on their win against Denmark Road High School this week, winning 5 ½

to ½ in the regional knock out stage of the national competition.

In Squash, the Key Stage 3 team won the Regional Squash Championship on Tuesday this week, beating Wycliffe College and Kings College Taunton. A fantastic achievement, which means we are now through to National Finals on the 12 March in Birmingham. My thanks to Mr Deacon for all his hard work coaching and supporting the team.

A huge well done also goes to the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Football side, who were victorious against St Edward's School in the County Cup this week, winning 2-0. The team will play away at Cleeve School on 29 January; we wish them all the very best for their continued success. I am also pleased to announce the first fixture for our 1<sup>st</sup> XI girls' football team, who play Cleeve School next Wednesday as well. My thanks to Mr Ormston for his efforts in coaching the team, and we wish them all the best for their opening match.


In Rugby, congratulations go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV, who have chalked up victories against Llandovery College (26-14) and Millfield School (31-10) since the start of term. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV drew against Llandovery 26-26 in a hard-fought match against a tough side, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> XV took an extremely impressive win against Millfield, 46-5; very well done all to all players and coaches. The U12As won against Katherine Lady Berkeley this week 55 to 15, as did the U12Bs, 50 to 10. Our teams are certainly having an excellent season.

A reminder that the [SOCS School Sports Calendar](#) gives details of all teams, results and match reports. This weekend's matchday programme is also available [online](#).

Finally, the 1st VII Netball team won 60-43 against The Priory Academy last week in the fourth round of the *Sisters 'n' Sport* Cup; another impressive win against a talented opposition. It has been said by many times in school this week that the team are fast becoming known as one of our most successful Netball teams ever. The very best of luck to the players and hard working coaches Mrs Lynn and Mrs Brown as they take part in the regional Cup Finals in Bournemouth on Friday next week.

Just a reminder that next Friday (31 January) will be an INSET day for staff, and the School will be closed for pupils.

With best wishes for the weekend,



Matthew Lynch

HEADTEACHER

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