



## Pastoral Update

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Dear Parents

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding half-term, it's a perfect moment to reflect on the achievements of our school community. On behalf of the Key Stage teams, I am pleased to report on many impressive academic successes, creative projects, sporting triumphs and charitable initiatives. Our pupils and staff have shown remarkable dedication, resilience, and teamwork. It has been inspiring to witness their hard work and enthusiasm, which truly embody the spirit of our school.

### Whole-School Assemblies

Our traditional whole school assemblies have begun once again this term. These take place alongside individual year group and House assemblies. At the start of the new year, Mr Lynch shared his experience of visiting Brooklands Aviation and Motoring Museum. He reflected on the innovation, determination and record breaking that took place at the site of the world's first purpose-built racetrack and the excitement of the supersonic age with Concorde. His overarching message being that rapid change has always been a feature in our society and that amazing things can be achieved if we believe in ourselves and work hard. Mr Williams (Assistant Headteacher) gave an assembly on the true meaning of value, explaining that the value of anything is based on the way people behave towards it. Mr Williams used the example of Japanese art dealer Fushimiya and his cracked teacup. Pupils were asked to reflect about the 'little things they can say and do' to build the value of our school and make it a truly special place for all. To round off this term's whole-school assemblies, Mrs García (Assistant Headteacher) spoke about the importance of performing arts in society, and pupils were treated to a song from our school production *We Will Rock You*.

### PSHE

All pupils in Key Stage 3 have begun the new Spring Term schemes of work. Year 7 pupils have learnt about the importance of valuing diversity in our communities, the importance of British Values in promoting tolerance and mutual respect and human rights and responsibilities. Year 8 pupils have been exploring their interests and work patterns and workplaces, considering how to showcase their personal strengths and begin to research careers. In Year 9, pupils have continued to build on their understanding of Healthy Relationships, learning about sexually transmitted infections, contraception and safer sex.

As part of our ongoing commitment to raise awareness of important issues within modern society, the tutor time programme has provided students with the opportunity to reflect on Holocaust Memorial Day and learn about safer internet usage specifically scams and sextortion. We believe that this is a powerful way to enhance our PSHE curriculum and help our students to stay safe.

On Friday 4 February we were lucky to have hosted the High Sheriff, Mark Hurrell and Magistrate Julia Hurrell who provided a lunchtime talk to pupils interested in a career in Law. We look forward later this month to another visit to the County Court, where Year 12 students will experience a court in session which includes a briefing from court officials and an address by the sitting Judge. There will also normally be an opportunity at the end of the sitting for the Judge to explain any matters of interest and answer any questions.

All students who visit the Crown Court are invited to engage with the processes by which justice is administered, to consider the effects on a defendant of one impulsive, or perhaps intentional act resulting in a custodial sentence and to see for themselves the effects on the injured party.

Year 12 have continued with their programme of Enrichment, which aims to nurture students' personal, social, moral and cultural understanding and to prepare students for life beyond A Levels. Teacher taught topics this term have included: apprenticeships and alternatives to university, maintaining positive mental health, 'problematic' gambling, expression of religious beliefs, managing personal finances, pornography and its impact on sexual norms, understanding sexual health, and choosing a university. These lessons have been supplemented by visiting speakers including Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service who delivered an excellent presentation on the risks faced by young drivers and a talk on Personal Statements from Nottingham University. We are grateful to Mrs García (Assistant Headteacher) and Mr Marks (Head of Enrichment) for co-ordinating these provisions.

### Tommy's Award

Pupils continue to work towards the *Tommy's Award* for their particular year group. As we move towards the Summer Term, we will begin presenting successful participants with their badges and certificates to recognise their achievements. These presentations will be in whole school, as well as year group assemblies. The *Tommy's Award* is unique to our school and recognises pupil achievements in areas which go beyond the classroom, such as leadership, service to the School, creativity and participation in extracurricular activities.

### House Competitions

Following the completion of another term of House competitions, the scores between the Houses remains very tight.

With many events still to take place as we move into the second half of the Spring Term and the all-important Summer Term, all is very much still to play for. The highlights this term were House Basketball and House Music. During the House Music competition all participants showcased their superb skill and creativity, with all the Houses across all year groups working together under the leadership of Year 13. It was a real treat to then see a few of the highlights performed in front of the whole of Key Stage 3 and 4 in a recent assembly. Newgate House was the deserving overall winner.

The House Competitions next term include House Debate, the completion of House Rugby, House Football and House Netball.

### **Extracurricular**

We are extremely proud of the rich and diverse extracurricular programme we offer. The Spring extracurricular timetable is now available on the School website, and we encourage all pupils to take the opportunity to broaden their interests and try something new; we hope that there is something for everyone. We are grateful to all staff who give their time to provide these opportunities. Please click [here](#) to access the timetable.

Several Year 8 students have been involved in *Bikeability* training; developing their cycling skills despite the snow, wind and rainy conditions.

Our Junior Debate team competed in the district final and placed third, presenting arguments in favour and against the motion "*This house would suspend the development of AI*".

The STRS girls' football first team made school history this week, playing their first ever match and beating Chosen Hill 2-1. Despite feeling excited and nervous, the team quickly displayed skill, discipline, and determination. The team attacked relentlessly, though Chosen Hill's defence thwarted several attempts. A solid team effort and a well-deserved win on the road. A brilliant start to what we hope will be the continued development of girls' football at Sir Thomas Rich's.

And of course, the School production of *We Will Rock You*, performed over three nights has been a truly a remarkable achievement. The dedication and effort put in by the pupils and staff were evident in every aspect of the show. From the impressive acting to the electrifying music, the energy and enthusiasm from both the cast and audience created an unforgettable atmosphere. A huge congratulations to everyone who contributed—well done on an outstanding performance.

### **School Opening Times**

I would just like to remind you that School is open each school day from 7.45am until 5.30pm, other than for scheduled school events. Should pupils in Key Stage 3 or 4 need to stay after school, they should let a member of staff know and base themselves in either the private study room or the LRC, or the reception area if waiting for a parent to collect. We will be reviewing the option for later opening times of the LRC for our pupils taking examinations as we enter examination season.

### **Wellbeing**

As communicated to Parents earlier this term, we have been trialling use of an anonymous reporting tool called *The Listening Post*. This is proving to be a helpful addition to our suite of Pastoral care provisions, and we will continue to keep the tool live as we move through the academic year.

Our Anti-Bullying ambassadors have been active this term, with assemblies delivered to Years 7 and 8 on Neurodiversity, as well as having launched a poster competition to campaign against Online Bullying. It has been fantastic to see the entries from across the School, and the winners have been presented with certificates.

Continuing with the theme of Online Safety, pupils have had Year Group assemblies to mark Safer Internet Day, as well as working with their tutor groups on understanding scams and how to keep safe online.

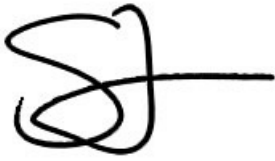
I would like to take this opportunity to bring your attention to our online library collection. On this platform, pupils can access a range of texts to support and enhance their own wellness. Titles include '*Life Skills for Teens*', '*The Teenage Guide to Stress*' and '*Boys Don't Cry*'. The books can be accessed [here](#).

The digital library can be accessed when logged in to a school computer by searching for ePlatform. When using a mobile device, pupils can install the ePlatform app from the app store, then click 'Add New Library', type in 'Sir Thomas Rich's School' and select it from the list. Pupils can log in with their standard STRS email address to start browsing and borrowing. Furthermore, pupils will be able to find physical books related to wellbeing in the Learning Resource Centre in school.

Finally, this term we have been working on a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter, specifically aimed at parents. Each half-term, we will aim to include information which is pertinent to supporting young people and equipping parents with the knowledge and skills to feel confident in supporting their child with their own wellbeing.

The first edition of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter can be accessed [here](#). Any feedback gratefully received.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the School, and I wish you and your family a restful half-term break.



Miss Sarah Tapscott

Deputy Headteacher

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