

Framwellgate School Durham
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Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

This week in school we've been focused in assemblies on Remembrance, culminating in services for Years 7 to 10 today with Reverend Joanne Thorns to which 6th Form students were also invited to attend. Along with much of the nation, we'll also observe a period of silence next Monday as we remember those people who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our democratic way of life and indeed all those people across the world impacted by war.

In assemblies we spoke specifically about the how humanity is unique in that as a species we're the only one on this planet that speaks to wage war but that also we're the only one that can create true art. The Christmas Day truce in 1914 when soldiers met in No Man's Land to play football, swap cigarettes and spend time in each other's company is a fairly well known story but it was singing in the trenches on Christmas Eve that first helped break down the barriers of conflict, British soldiers singing the hymn 'Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken', not knowing that the tune was the same as the German national anthem and then hearing 'Stille Nacht' or 'Silent Night' in return. Sometimes when we talk about "art" with students they instinctively see it as an abstract thing only to be found in galleries in London they don't go to, but in truth it surrounds us all, enriching our lives instead of damaging them or taking them away like war. The sculptor Henry Moore said, "To be an artist is to believe in life" and I would hope all our students choose art, not war.

Fortunately for many of our students armed conflict is an abstract thing that happens somewhere far away but there are members of our community here who have faced the reality of war and indeed are here as a direct result of conflict. As a School of Sanctuary, we are proud to welcome those seeking safety, to offer them a sense of belonging to our community and give them opportunities to thrive and succeed. This is not only without doubt ethically the right thing to do but also fits with our core values of compassion and respect for all. Of course, it would be a better world if there was no need for us to do this but we're proud to not only offer this help but to inculcate and foster in all our students the belief that true strength is to be found in helping those that need the most. I'm not personally a religious man but I do have a copy of the New Testament and Psalms on my desk here in school, a gift from a close friend who saw active service in Afghanistan and gave me his military issue book upon his return. It includes a 'Paratrooper's Prayer Card' that ends with the sentence, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' I'm proud that we as a school are able to offer just that to those who need it most.

Many thanks for your continued support of the school; I hope you all have a good weekend.



Michael Wright

Please find this week's key messages below.

Ofsted

As you'll hopefully be aware, the school was inspected this week for Ofsted. We will of course share the outcome at the appropriate time, but I wanted to thank all parents and carers who completed the parent survey as part of this process. I also had several individual messages of support from parents which was very thoughtful of them; apologies if I haven't individually replied to all of them yet - it's been a slightly busy week, but I will get there! I quote from one parent here who wrote, "I hope the whole team have a great day and use the opportunity to showcase their talent, expertise, experience and nurturing approach." I'd like to think as a community we did just that.

Contacting School

We encourage all parents and carers to contact school and share any concerns (or indeed praise) they may have. However, during the day our focus is on the students here within the school and this means it isn't always possible to offer an immediate response to calls or emails or indeed for the relevant person to be available. Equally, please don't arrive at school without a prior appointment and expect to see whoever you'd like to talk with as this is only likely to lead to disappointment. Few of us would expect to go to our GPs or dentist and be seen straightaway; please see school in the same way. What can be an urgent conversation from your or your child's perspective must be seen in the wider context of the 1,300 students here. Many thanks in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

VEX Robotics

On Saturday 19th October, 12 of our students from Years 9 and 10 competed at the Royal Grammar School against schools from as far afield as London, Birmingham and Blackpool in the first VEX robotics tournament of the new High Stakes season. In the final, the Fram Hyper Bots team just missed out on securing a place in the national championships by 4 points, with a close-fought match ending 18 to 14. The team were a real credit to the school, and they learned a huge amount ready for next time. The next competition event is on Saturday 23rd November at Tanfield School.

Can we thank parents for their support and contributions, in particular the parent who provided the amazing team t-shirts that were designed by a student for free, and the parent who donated £50 towards VEX spares.

Key Year 11 Information – Mock Exams Week Beginning 18th November

We hope your child had a restful break over half term but also dedicated some time to their mock preparation, as was discussed with both you and your child in last half terms progress meetings.

We'd like to congratulate Year 11 students on their hard work and dedication to RAS. They have now completed 5 weeks of RAS and next week signifies the last RAS week in this block. Please encourage your child to attend RAS next week and extra sessions should they wish to do so, as next week is the final push before the mocks start on Monday 18th November.

To help with mock preparations, your child has a revision booklet including - timetable templates to help them organise their time, a mock timetable, checklists for each subject so they know what they should be revising and the revision techniques, so students know how to revise. An electronic was also sent to yourselves via ClassCharts before half term.

We understand that the mock exam process can be a stressful one and students received an 'exam stress' assembly from an external agency this week in their PD lesson, to offer them some help and support with this.

During the mock period **ALL** Year 11 students will be able to access a free breakfast in the form of toast in Einsteins from 8am to ensure they have the opportunity to eat before a busy day of mock exams.

Miss L. Lutynski, Assistant Headteacher