

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

## End of Half Term 1 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Autumn has arrived and with it comes the rain and cold. It is lovely to see our students looking resplendent in their new school jumpers and ties, and although we have been relatively lucky with the weather so far, it is time now for our students to make sure that they can stay warm and dry. Just a reminder then that coats are now required for outside, but not while they are in the building please. Hoodies are still not permitted and must not be worn for school. If a hoodie is your child's outdoor clothing of choice, it must be removed before entering the building and put away in bags or lockers.

Thank you all for your patience while we have waited for the jumpers and ties to arrive. I recognise and share in your frustration, but I have to say it has been worth the wait. Our students look fabulous! Our tie-giving ceremonies were a particular highlight and I am impressed by how many students have already mastered the art of the Windsor knot. Please can you make sure that you label your child's uniform – especially the tie – as, although we do our best to reunite missing items with their owners, it is all the more difficult without a name on the label.

### Other Half Term 1 highlights:

#### Exciting Futures



SWS students launched themselves enthusiastically into investigating their next steps with 4 exciting events in the space of 5 weeks. Firstly, we had our Post-16 Providers Fair at SWS where students in Year 10 and 11 were able to find out what courses, apprenticeships and training are available to them in the local area when they graduate from SWS. All local colleges, sixth forms and providers were on hand to answer hundreds of



questions. Secondly, we jetted 60 Year 10 students off to Keele University for an Astrophysics discovery workshop. Our University visits are a great way to find out more about what to expect at Uni coupled with an academic experience which broadens their GCSE curriculum. In October, we hosted a talk from by Dr Gemma Holliday, Lead Cheminformatician at Medicines Discovery Catalpault where students found out about routes into research. Last, and certainly not least, 240 Year 9 and Year 10 students hopped on coaches last week to Cheshire College South and West to visit an exciting and interactive local careers fair. It was brilliant to see our students coming away with Work Experience offers, ideas for volunteering and a deeper understanding of the local employment scene.

### **Rewards Week**

This week saw the launch of our rewards programme where students were rewarded for behaviours which exemplified our core pillars of Opportunity, Community and Courage. Students with positive attendance and punctuality, excellent progress in lessons and all-round good effort both in and outside of the classroom, enjoyed a range of experiences chosen by them which included a trip to Nando's, a cinema visit, Dominos pizza, sporting activities and afternoon tea in the library.

New for Half term 2 will be the launch of our new attendance and punctuality rewards. Here, positive attendance and punctuality between 31<sup>st</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> Dec will be rewarded with multiple chances to enter a year group raffle where students in each year can win high street gift vouchers. There is also an opportunity to win the choice of either an iPad, a Playstation 5 or a bike. You've got to be in it (school) to win it – as they say!

### **Split lunches**

This term we trialled a split lunch system for when it is too wet to go out outside at lunch time. Years 9, 10 and 11 went to lunch first while Years 7 and 8 went for afternoon form time and then Years 9, 10 and 11 went to form time while Years 7 and 8 went to lunch. The feedback from students and staff was overwhelmingly positive – to the point where so many students asked for it to be the way we do lunch every day, that I have had to promise to give it a go. This means that from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October, we will operate our split lunch system each day whatever the weather. We can then review it before Christmas to see how positively we still feel about it.

### **Some useful reminders:**

#### **Uniform**

Our uniform changes for this academic year came directly from the students themselves and, on the whole, I am delighted by how smart they look. While waiting for the jumpers, we allowed any plain black jumper or the school blazer to be worn, but now that the official



school jumpers have been allocated, only these should be worn. No non-uniform jumpers or blazers are to be worn after the half term holiday please.

Having the choice of wearing trainers or shoes has been very successful and students have also enjoyed the relative flexibility of being allowed to wear a nose stud, stud earrings, natural looking lashes and natural, appropriately short acrylic nails. However, we are now at the point where obviously false lashes, brightly coloured acrylic nails, hoop earrings and nose rings are starting to creep in and it would be a shame to have to switch to the zero-tolerance policy that so many other schools have. Please help us to support our student-centred uniform policy by reminding your child that unnatural looking lashes and nails must be removed immediately and that hoop earrings, nose rings, rings, bracelets and necklaces will be confiscated. Refusal to do so will result in your child being isolated.

The majority of our students have opted to wear trousers. In our uniform policy, I wrote:

- Plain black trousers or a skirt.  
**(Skirts must be at a respectful and appropriate length: no more than an inch above knee length. They must be a standard school skirt and not Lycra. Jeans, tracksuit bottoms, leggings or jeggings are not permitted.)**

Being so specific about the skirts has resulted in no lycra skirts in school – which is great. Not being specific about the trousers has resulted in an influx of trousers which are skinny-fit due to their high lycra content. The knock-on effect of this is that leggings are now starting to make a re-appearance because it is difficult to tell which are leggings and which are skinny-fit trousers. I'd like to remind you that that leggings are not permitted and skinny-fit trousers will be permitted for this academic year only. Next year, I will be specific about that in the policy but recognize that it is impractical and unfair to specify that for this year.

### **Mobile phones**

As per our mobile phone policy, mobile phones are for before and after school, outside of the building. Phones must be switched off and out of sight during school hours. Phones that are visible will be confiscated. This includes phones that students have tucked, still visible, into their waist bands because they do not have a bag. Students should have either a bag or a locker space in which to put anything that shouldn't be on show or that they don't want to carry with them. The trial of Year 11s having access to their phones in the designated Year 11 space at breaks and lunches has also been a success and I am happy to continue this next half term.

### **School Day**

Finishing earlier on a Friday is another change that has been successful and that will continue this academic year. This has allowed us to increase the opportunities we can have



on offer elsewhere across the school week. Similarly, so that we can increase our enrichment and intervention offer across the year, the last day of each half term will also be a half-day early finish. This way, staff and students can stay later at other times when they need to. Specific finish times and dates will be made available on our website which we are currently in the process of updating, ready for next half term.

Finally, thank you once again for your patience and continued support. This half term has been long, but rewarding thanks to our dedicated, hardworking staff, and our wonderful, funny students. Our new Year 7s, incidentally, have fitted right in and add seamlessly to the overall buzz of the place. It's like they have always been here.

I hope you have a safe and happy half term break.

Yours sincerely,

Nicki Gregg

**Principal**