

31st March 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please find attached the end of term newsletter highlighting some of the many activities that have taken place in school this term. I hope that you continue to find the half-termly newsletters plus weekly Bulletins both informative and helpful in terms of keeping you abreast of the work of a very busy school.

The term has as always been a very busy one. Our school dog, Maximus has been warmly welcomed by all and is most certainly a huge hit with students and staff. A steady stream of both, regularly visit my office to provide playtime – I would be hard pressed to tell you who enjoys this most: Max, students or staff – and to take him out and about on walks. Max has adapted well to the size and bustle of a large secondary school. Whilst we have to date carefully limited his exposure in order not to overwhelm him, he is now starting to go on learning walks around the school. We anticipate that he will also start his Reading Dog training in the near future. You are able to follow Max's student produced Twitter feed should you wish to do so.

The formal opening of our new school by Charles Walker MP has been another highlight of the term. Charles provided significant support for us at times when we were having issues with the contractors, and I was therefore particularly pleased to be able to ask him to open the school. Thank you for all of your many highly positive comments about the building. Students and staff are very much enjoying working and learning in it. Whilst not without its inevitable teething problems, we are gradually working our way through them and adapting to a new and immeasurably improved working environment.

You will have seen that demolition is well underway – the former Science/Business/ICT block has now gone. Demolition is continuing to plan, with landscaping to follow. As things stand, we remain on track for all work to be complete by 31st August 2017.

Years 11, 12 and 13 are immersed in final preparations for their forthcoming public exams, which now loom large. We wish each of them every possible success as they move into a period that will determine what their next steps and future opportunities are. As such, I know that they are aware that the Easter holiday needs to be one of extensive work and revision. The time for thinking that exams are a long way in the future is gone. The time to act and secure their futures is now.

Staff continue to work tirelessly to ensure that final preparations are detailed and thorough, and we once again have an exceptionally high number of revision and preparation sessions being run for students over the Easter break, plus after school each night up to and during the examination period. As always, I am enormously grateful to staff, and very proud of the fact that we have a staff body that so willingly gives up precious holiday time to come and work with students. I'm equally proud of our students who flock to these extra sessions, keen to achieve the highest grades that they can.

Year 13 are of course preparing to leave school and to move on to the next stage of their adult lives. They are another lovely year group and we will miss them when they leave. As is usual at this time of year, the school has elected its new Sixth Form Prefect Top Team. I would therefore like to take a moment to say thank you to the outgoing Year 13 Top Team who have been an absolute delight to work with. Their commitment to their school has shone through all of their work and we are so very grateful. Our thanks

go to:

- Head Boy – Ryan Andrew
- Head Girl – Eleanor Turner
- Deputy Head Boy – Charlie Standing
- Deputy Head Girl – Chanel Burton

Senior Lead Prefects:

- Amelia Boyd
- Aaron Laister
- Nick Thorneycroft
- Annie Clarke
- Lucy Mc Cann
- Leanna Saunders

In turn, many congratulations go to the newly elected Top Team – we very much look forward to working with them:

- Kira Scales – Head Girl
- Tom Fitzsimmons – Head Boy
- Amber Doolan – Deputy Head Girl
- Connor Fitzgerald – Deputy Head Boy
- Nadine Bakali – Senior Lead Prefect
- Charlie Welch – Senior Lead Prefect
- Daniel McGonigle – Senior Lead Prefect
- Jake Hassan – Senior Lead Prefect
- Panashe Mubwandarikwa – Senior Lead Prefect

Recent Parent Survey

Thank you very much for your many responses to the recent survey on the school's strengths and priority areas as part of our planning for next year. It was a pleasure to read so much positive feedback. It was an equal pleasure to see parents engaging so constructively in where the school could look next as part of its process of continuous improvement. I will do a final collation of the responses over Easter and will write to you again to summarise the outcomes at the start of next term. As always, your thoughts and suggestions will be explicitly built into the 17/18 School Development Plan.

One parent asked for confirmation that all asbestos in the old building was being managed appropriately. I can confirm that this is of course absolutely the case, and has been throughout this project.

School Funding

If you have not already received it, I will be writing to you in the very near future to highlight the funding issues being faced by all schools. Goffs is in the unusual and very fortunate position of having not insignificant financial reserves to draw on. We are not therefore imminently facing the very serious decisions that other schools are having to take regarding staffing and hours of operation. However, the current funding situation is as bad as I have ever known in it in almost 15 years of Headship. The cuts are deep and are having an impact across the board. In my letter you will see that I ask you to lobby Charles

Walker and others. I would be very grateful for your support with this. It is essential that Government hear loud and clear that if funding does not change urgently, there will be a very serious detrimental effect in all schools. Thank you for your support with this.

Staffing Update

We say goodbye today to two members of staff. Our best wishes and thanks go to Frank Williams, one of our caretakers, who is moving to a new position. We wish him every future success and happiness. Our huge thanks also go to Sarah Kelly in Art who leaves to return to Australia at the end of her visa. Sarah has been an absolute asset to our staffing and we will very much miss her. I am very pleased, however, to be able to tell you that Mary Greenacre, former Head of Art who retired last summer, has been tempted back from retired life in France for the summer term, and will therefore cover the final term of Emily Herridge's maternity leave. We very much look forward to seeing Mary again.

Every best wish and happiness goes also to Olivia Garner who is getting married this Easter.

Uniform

Many students are of course, growing rapidly. Please can I take this opportunity to remind parents that skirts must be knee length. If you have a daughter in Years 7 – 10 whose skirt is no-longer knee length, I would be very grateful if you could ensure that an appropriate skirt is purchased over the holiday. This will ensure that no student needs to be placed in isolation for having the incorrect uniform at the start of next term. For all students, black leather shoes are required – not trainers.

As always, if you require financial assistance with uniform, please do not hesitate to contact me. As we go into hopefully warm weather next term, students will at that point be told that blazers do not necessarily have to be worn during the school day, although they must of course have them with them at all times.

In closing, I wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Easter break. School will start again at the usual time on **Tuesday 18th April 2017**.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Alison J Garner
Principal