



6th February 2018

Dear parents,

I am writing my last letter of the half-term as the 6th Form finish their mock exams and Year 10 prepare for their exams beginning the second week after half-term.

Work experience

The Year 11 pupils are going on work experience this week. It is an extremely positive experience for the vast majority of pupils, offering them the opportunity to be in a real workplace setting in an area of potential interest as a future career. We will feedback on the successes of the week in the first letter after half-term.

Exam Results

The DfE Performance Tables were updated following re-marks at the end of January with additional information, and they confirm the strength of the school across the range of GCSE subjects. In particular, the final Progress 8 figures show pupils across the ability range at the school gaining, on average, at least a quarter of a grade higher in English and Maths than comparable pupils nationally. The breakdown by area also confirms how in the Open area, where both non-GCSEs and GCSEs are counted together even though non-GCSEs usually score more highly, this school's approach that all pupils are entered for GCSEs acts to our disadvantage, with a knock-on effect in the overall Progress 8 figure.

Competitive Courses

For many years, the school has run a successful "competitive courses" programme to support 6th Formers seeking entry to courses and universities where there is intense competition (hence the name). As well as Oxbridge, medicine and veterinary medicine, this includes others where the offers are now typically at least A* AA, such as Maths at Warwick or Exeter, Courtauld Institute, Durham, Imperial, etc. This includes introductory sessions to ensure a wide range of pupils are aware of the opportunities and support available and to help choose the right course and university for them. Help is provided in producing personal statements and in preparing for interviews so that pupils can feel confident when under pressure. An additional twist has emerged in the last couple of years as the UCAS process has opened up with greater flexibility for both universities and pupils to switch and change as each seek to find the "best". Universities are now making unconditional offers to candidates whom they view as top-quality, and our policy of doing AS-levels at the end of the Lower 6th means that universities can be more confident in making such unconditional offers. This year, we are celebrating the offers being received by a range of pupils including Sasha Giles and Joe Edwards to read Geography and PPE respectively at Oxford, Molly Hunter receiving offers for medicine, Jacob Byrne, Jenny Ward and Tamsin Airey for Maths at Warwick/Exeter and an unconditional offer for Dan Crawshaw for Chemical Engineering.

Charities Week

The annual Charities Week takes place the week after half-term from 19th- 23rd February. The week will see a series of lunchtime events including pupil talent shows and teachers performing. The money raised goes to our three longstanding charities- The Royal Marsden, Build Africa and the Romania link. It is always a superb week with the Lower 6th organising all aspects of the events. The cost of tickets is £2.50 and we are also having mufti day on Friday 23rd February. Many parents have already paid for the year's mufti days on parent pay.



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Apprenticeship Fair

We are hosting a brand new careers event for pupils interested in apprenticeships. The event is taking place on 14th March. We have around 20 apprenticeship providers and employers coming in to offer them insights. A specific letter will be sent out prior to the event detailing what is available. Parents will be able to attend at 3.30pm if they would like to. We are always interested in hearing from companies who would like to be involved. Please contact Mr Panting on panting.chris@ashcombe.surrey.sch if you have any questions about the event.

New School Minibus

The new school minibus arrived on 16 January. Thank you to everyone who took part in this event and helped us reach the £25,000 target. Pupils who walked the 10-mile route should be justifiably proud of themselves. You may notice that there is a logo on the bus for Stonegate Homes, in recognition of their support with a contribution of £5,000 to help us reach our target. Having two 'lite' minibuses which can be driven without a D1 licence requirement means that we have been able to sell two older minibuses with driver restrictions.

Sporting Update

The Year 10 Boys football team reached the last 16 in the English Schools Cup, but lost away on penalties to an Essex school after dominating the game.

Year 8 Parent Support Evening

This has been postponed from the provisional published date of 6th February, and will take place in the second half of term, covering online learning resources and internet safety / social media advice. A specific letter will be sent out soon with details.

Y11 Exam Support Evening

This takes place on Wednesday 28th February at 6pm, and, as well as the usual information and advice, will include details about the new 9-1 grading and its implications for post-16 choices.

Ashcombe Road pavement works

We are pleased that this longstanding flooding hazard to pedestrians including our pupils is being resolved. We would ask that if possible parents use alternatives to the Ranmore entrance to drop pupils to reduce the congestion.

End of term

We break up for half-term at 3.30 pm on Friday 9th February. School will restart on Monday 19th February at 8.55am.

Yours sincerely,



D.J.Blow
Headteacher