

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians

The first term in a new academic year is always busy, and this year was no exception. As we welcomed all our existing students into this academic year, we also welcomed new students into Reception, Year 7 and Year 12. It has been fantastic watching them settle into our community, build relationships with their peers and teachers, and begin to make progress in learning. We have been delighted by how well all our new and existing students have settled into school this year.

As Head Teacher, I led our welcome-back assemblies across the Secondary phase, launching our new vision, values and expectations with students. In the Primary phase, this took the form of our Aspire Superheroes assemblies which saw members of the Senior Leadership Team don capes and masks to inspire students to demonstrate the six new values daily. This has continued throughout the term, where our Aspire Superheroes appear in lessons every so often to remind and reward students.

One of my highlights of this term has to be our Car Free Day and Whole School Sponsored Walk. It was fantastic to experience such a wonderful atmosphere as families made the journey to and from school on foot, leaving the car behind, as our student band played, and our in-line skating demonstration took place. Despite the driving wind and rain at points, I particularly enjoyed my walk with Year 7 this year. All students, from our smallest Reception children during their walk around the block and back, to the eldest Year 11 and Sixth Form students during their 10-mile Birling Gap and back route, were an absolute credit to our school. This year's Sponsored Walk raised an amazing £3,085.12 for St. Wilfred's Hospice in Eastbourne and our own Eco School; thank you to everyone that supported this event.

In the Primary phase, students have experienced a 'Beach Day' in Year 3 to hunt for fossils, the House Harvest collection for Eastbourne Foodbank, including an assembly from representatives from Eastbourne Foodbank, a 'live' Dinosaur workshop for Year 1, a Superheroes Day for children in Reception, a fantastic Planetarium visit to Years 2 and 4, and a swimming gala. Six Primary phase students were also interviewed for Eastbourne Youth Radio by our Year 9 students, and on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September, we celebrated different languages and cultures for European Day of Languages. Special mention must go to Eva in Year 6 for her Eco presentation to Caroline Ansell at the Towner Art Gallery.

A huge thank you to our Years 1-6 parents who attended our parent events; we hope you enjoyed the opportunity of your children sharing their work with you. This term, we have appointed our Primary Leadership Team with Librarians in Years 4, 5 and 6, School Council members from Years 1-6, Careers Ambassadors, House Captains, Pupil Playground Buddies, Eco Committee members and Junior Office Assistants.

Our new Friends of Gildredge House (FoGH) team put on their very first Quiz Night, raising over £700 for our school in what was a fun and enjoyable evening while also giving parents the opportunity to meet other Gildredge House families. Our next big FoGH-organised events will be the Primary phase Disco on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November and the Christmas Fair on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Please look out for more updates very soon.

In the Secondary phase, our Year 7 students enjoyed a fun Team Building Day at the University of Brighton. Our dry slope skiing trip, in preparation for next year's overseas trip, was a real

success and venue staff were incredibly complimentary about our students. We had the second highest number of Duke of Edinburgh Award completions in the county last year. We also have a record number of students completing their Bronze and Silver Awards this year.

Fourteen students attended The Brilliant Club, which aims to give our young people an experience of university learning to help them make an informed decision about their future. Over the course of eight weeks, the students will work with a PhD student on their specialist subject and write a mini dissertation which will be marked and returned to them. They will then attend a celebration event at another Russell Group University. Year 6 and Year 8 Brilliant Club cohorts will also be taking place this year. Participation in the Brilliant Club forms part of our new High Prior Attainers strategy, which we are very excited about.

As part of our annual careers programme, last week, we held our Careers Fair for Year 11 students who got to meet a variety of exhibitors from a range of industries to explore possible future pathways.

In the Sixth Form, our Year 13 students have just finished a very busy mock exam series. We have seven students applying for early entry into Oxbridge and to read medicine. The entrance tests for Oxford and Cambridge are during the half term period, so we wish our students the best of luck. All our Sixth Form students have begun their Gildredge Giveback programme of service to our local community. Year 12 students have recently been on a trip to the Independent Learning Conference held at the University of Sussex. I would also like to congratulate Gabriel, in Year 13, who has won a place in the semi-finals of the National Gifted and Talented Scholars and Brit Insurance Digital Challenge 2022! This is an amazing achievement, as Gabriel beat thousands of other students to get this far. We wish him well in London for the next round on Friday 28th October 2022.

Our recent open events were successful, and there were a great number of students across all phases who offered their time to support these important events. The students' conduct was exemplary, and I am proud of how well they represented the school; they are all role models to others. Prospective parents have informed me how much they valued our students' input and how well they articulated the school values.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that our new caterers, Harrisons, begin working with us after half term and we are very much looking forward to seeing what culinary delights they prepare for us. We will also be launching a breakfast offer for students in the Secondary phase, commencing at 8.10am until Tutor Time begins at 8.25am.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful couple of weeks, and we look forward to seeing you all back at school on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Kind regards



Mr C. Bull  
Head Teacher