

October 2009

Dear Parent / Carer

Now that we are at half term I am writing to thank you for supporting us in having our best start ever! We expect the best, and students this year have risen to the occasion, particularly with regard to smartness, courtesy and learning performance. It is a rarity to have to give a uniform comment and much pleasanter to be able to talk to students without prefacing it with a request for their Planner! Our only remaining concern relates to girls' skirts – some of which are embarrassingly short, especially when they are climbing stairs. Can I ask that you check your daughter's skirt and see they are not rolled up at the waist and not more than 6cm above the knee?

Our Open Morning, Governors' Open Morning and interview candidates' feedback, all confirmed courteous students willing to open doors, talk to adults, go out of their way to welcome and engage visitors. Our first 'Learning Walk' of the new year also confirmed high standards of classroom conduct and learning; we now await the outcomes of the first progress tracking window.

Ninety four of you joined our first Parents' Information Evening on Gifted and Talented learners on October 15<sup>th</sup> and we welcomed the opportunity to hear your views and answer your questions on this aspect of school provision. Further evenings are planned termly: on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, with a focus on student 'Safety & Safeguarding'; and on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, with a focus yet to be decided. Please let us know if you have a particular area you would like us to address. The Gifted and Talented evening, as the ones last year on Student Assessment, Tracking and Reporting, and Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, were in direct response to parents' views.

Many of you will know from the Student Planner the early closure days across the school year. I apologise for a late reminder about the Open Evening day on the website and for not writing formally to new Year 7 parents.

School closes at 1.15pm on Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> for Christmas and Thursday July 22<sup>nd</sup> for the summer holiday; there is no early finish for Easter. Please ensure your child goes straight home and conducts themselves sensibly. We did have one report recently of our students' misbehaviour along The Grove and around the war memorial. Obviously, high numbers are leaving the site together, many walking into town. They need to be sensitive to and respectful of local residents and visitors.

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December is our annual Review Day when students only come into school for the appointment with their tutor: full details will be in a separate communication after half term.  
Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December is a Training Day and no students are in school.

For those of you with students in our Year 11, please note that our Post-16 Open Evening is on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 6.15: we encourage you to join us if you can.

After some very good results from last year's GCSE and 'A' level students, our challenge this year is to see them improve even further and pull beyond the 80% 5+ A\*-C grades for this year's Year 11, with every student achieving beyond expectation. We look forward to keeping you in the picture with progress on student achievement, as well as on our new build, and our Learning Platform.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian James  
Headteacher