



20th July 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 8 End of Term Letter

Year 8 started the final half term with their end of year exams, they displayed positive attitudes and determination to do their best. The year group overcame their fears and learnt valuable lessons.

Many of our students recognised that learning to prepare for the exams is often just as difficult, if not more so, than learning the content itself for all the different subjects. On personal reflection, I had an older sister who modelled effective revision techniques and taught me how to study effectively. This was a great support to me, however I realised for many of our year group they may be the eldest sibling and therefore the first to face this challenge. To help the students prepare I dedicated a week of tutor times to look at the different skills needed including:

- Revision methods/ techniques
- Planning a revision timetable
- Mental preparation and positive mindset
- Managing workload and perceived levels of stress

The sessions were delivered by the sixth form house prefects and many brought along with them examples of their own work. The message given to students throughout was that these exams were a learning curve, a chance to display the progress they had made but also a chance to develop valuable skills for their future success. The whole year group should be proud of their achievements; they showed perseverance, resilience and an admirable motivation to succeed.

To celebrate all of their efforts the year group were invited to a "DVD and Ice Pop" event where they watched a personal favourite of mine *The Greatest Showman*. The theme song from *The Greatest Showman* "This is me" was also the theme song to our end of term Presentation Assembly which focused on developing and celebrating their sense of self-identity. Thank you to all of the wonderful speakers, filmmakers and choir who performed.

This has certainly been a term of teamwork with house events galore. Our year group are certainly not lacking in competitiveness and there is a strong sense of inter form and inter house competition. However, they get the balance completely right and are always humble in victory and gracious in defeat and I hope they never get tired of me stating that it is the taking part and internal reward that counts.

Technology day was another great success and saw the year group designing a protective device from two sheets of A4 paper to stop a digestive biscuit being crushed by a weight being dropped at height. I feel we definitely have some designers in the mix because the best designs witheld a weight of 1.3 kg!

Spanish day was crammed with many exciting themed lessons including a salsa workshop, geography and drama. In the afternoon representatives from each form were involved in a Spanish Master Chef competition. It wasn't just the cooking that was being judged but each form had a designated design team who were in charge of the presentation, the menu, supportive information and table design (we don't do things by half here at the Holt). I was lucky enough to be asked to judge the food along with other staff. I knew that the girls would do well but I hadn't anticipated the exquisite delights that were produced by all forms. 8W were crowned the winners of the overall event.

Another house competition was house music where all students performed a song from Disney. This put many out of their comfort zone performing in public but all were fantastic and in tune! The winners were 8L who performed "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid*.

The sports hall has been full all half term with forms practising for house dance. The amount of work that goes into these dances shouldn't be underestimated as students choreograph their own routines with the help of year 10 prefects. Judging the forms was so difficult because they were all fantastic, I would like to say well done to everyone involved and a big congratulations to 8C who were crowned winners for this year.

Sports day was electric this year with an earlier 9.00 am start due to the very hot weather. Some of the year 8 students were on a languages trip last year and this was therefore their first experience of the unique Holt style Sports Day. The atmosphere was inspiring with all competitors in their house colours giving their all in every event. Charity prefects and helpers worked hard on stalls making money for their house charity and students cheered on fellow house competitors across all years with the backing music provided by a DJ from Ibiza. The athletics events finished with staff v student relays, a colour run, and a few more tunes from our resident DJ. 8C were the winners from year 8 and Clothworkers won across all years. This was all captured by our year 8 film club who the day before had a workshop with our talented year 11 Lucy. The following Monday the students worked in small groups editing their photos and film clips using the iMac computers in school to create their own mini movie, which was then edited by Lucy to form a fantastic Year 8 Film Club Sports Day Video that was revealed in the End of Term Assembly. Thank you to Lucy for giving up your time and well done to the year 8 students who will now be able to share their new found skills to ensure that we are able to keep on capturing these wonderful year group memories.

The science house event was spectacular. Lessons were dedicated to transforming classrooms into museums with a specified theme. Some of the entries included a history time line, interactive displays, an activity resource pack, investigations linked to the theme, a 3D display exhibit and a museum exhibit book. I was given a tour of all of the museums by the science department after the judging and was amazed by what I saw. The imagination and creativity that went into all areas was amazing. There was a winner for each task and the overall winner of house science was 8G. Well done to every girl in every form for playing their part in this event.

To round off a fantastic term and fantastic year we visited Go Ape in Black Park. 182 students attended the trip and spent the afternoon zooming down zip lines, balancing between the treetops and bounding around the nets suspended high in the trees, sliding down slides and throwing giant inflatable balls at each other. In addition to this the army put the students through their paces in the military games. Session groups and friendship groups amalgamated into one excitable mass as the year group and teachers had some well-earned fun. The Go Ape staff complemented our girls on their behaviour saying we were the best school group that had ever visited. The trip was rounded off with a good old singalong all the way back to school. We have certainly ended the term on a high!

What a year it has been at school and how fast it has gone by. Well done and thank you to all of the students for your hard work and engagement in enrichment and extra-curricular activities and thank you to parents for your continued support.

I wish you all a restful yet exciting break.

Yours sincerely



Miss C Shephard
Head of Year 8