

20th December 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Year 8 – End of term letter

The year 8s have made a fantastic start to the year. They took the challenge of the new academic year in their stride and seemed to enjoy no longer being the youngest in the school, willingly chaperoning lost year 7s to their lessons in the first few weeks of term! This has been my first term as Head of Year and one that has left me feeling honour at what a kind, talented and characterful group of students year 8 are, and how lucky I am to have been given the opportunity to lead them through their time at the Holt.

To aid in the building of an identity and cohesiveness of the year group I have introduced 3 values which complement and coincide with the schools' character virtues; unity, balance and integrity. Our first focus on unity focuses on cohesiveness between forms, houses and the wider school community. Secondly, it is important to maintain a balance between working hard and pursuing interests outside of the classroom, allowing them to live interesting lives in the future. I echo the words of the Co-Headteachers that success at school focuses not only on academic success, but also on character development. Our third value is integrity; to enable students to be guided correctly by their moral compass and consider their choices and actions, and the impact they may have on others and the world around us. Assembly time has been used to discover the meanings of the year group values along with the promotion of clubs at the school. During the unity assembly, each student was asked to write down what unity meant to them and the following themes came through strongly; Teamwork through working together and putting differences aside; Togetherness coming together as one and community - working together and belonging together. During assemblies, we have also had performances from the year 7&8 choir, ukulele club, football club, rugby club and wise words from the Head Student team to promote balance. I am looking forward to the performances in the end of term presentation assembly, which focuses on the year groups values of unity, balance and integrity, from students representing netball, dance, Holt writers, art, the year 7&8 choir, POR and English.

I feel it is important to be a visible head of year and, as I am not lucky enough to teach all students in year 8, I like to regularly drop in on form times and lessons. I have found this extremely enjoyable, as the atmosphere is calm, focused and purposeful. I particularly enjoyed spending a lesson in the Learning Link exploring the characters of the *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. I look forward to visiting more lessons in the New Year.

This term the competitiveness between forms and house spirit has been evident. The year kicked off with the form board decorating competition (which is more strategic than you may think). This was particularly difficult to judge, as all boards were well presented and represented of all members of the form. 8T took first place with their personalised touch of added extras. House maths was spirited with the entire year group in the main hall contemplating over maths questions and riddles - 8H came out as victorious. House netball was set to be a close competition as 50 year eights regularly attend netball club. 8C took the trophy this year with an unbeaten run in the competition. This week was the Christmas fair which definitely brought a festive feeling to the Holt.

Each year eight form pulled together with the planning and perfectly executed running of their various stalls contributing to the raising of school funds. In the coming week we will find out who is victorious in the Christmas cake decorating competition and, one of my personal favourites, the Christmas door decorating competition. As you can see, the term has certainly been busy!

At this important stage in your daughter's education, it is very important your daughter achieves the highest possible attendance. As a year group our attendance is 95.69%, which is good, but it would be even better to see it at 98% or above. In this first term a few days off with a cough or cold has a big impact on your daughter's attendance figure, but I am sure as the weather improves in the New Year this will improve.

Please find attached, for your reference, the Extra Curricular timetable for the spring term. I encourage all students to make attending a new club one of their New Year's resolutions for 2018.

Best wishes for a lovely Christmas.

Yours sincerely



Miss C Shephard
Head of Year 8