



March 2018

Dear Parent / Guardian

RE: Year 9 - End of term letter

This term may have been shorter in terms of weeks, but Year 9 have done an amazing job of fitting so much in! They will certainly be in need of a well-earned rest over the Easter break.

The main focus of this term for Year 9 has been on selecting their GCSE options choices. This started back in January with the GCSE information evening when it was wonderful to meet so many of you in person. Students then received lots of information through assemblies organised by options teachers before trialling their new subjects on taster day. Finally, students had an interview with me or a member of the senior leadership team to talk through their final choices. On the whole, Year 9 seem very excited about their GCSE choices for the next academic year. It is important though, that they continue to apply equal effort across their subject areas in preparation for the KS3 examinations – and not just those subjects they know they will continue into Year 10.

It has been a busy term with a number of activities taking place and I have been impressed that so many of our students continue to prosper outside of the classroom as well as in lessons. Year 9 have continued to participate in visiting WADE which is appreciated greatly by the local community. We also awarded certificates for outstanding contributions to charity in our recent presentation assembly to Daniela, Eloise, Sophie and River.

As well as this, Year 9 entered the Young Magistrates Competition and won their first round in the competition. Congratulations to India, Kirsten, Zoe, Alice, Charlotte, Sylvie, Alexine, Elen, Abigail, Emma, Sophie, Emma, Rosie, Amelia and Lucy. It takes a lot of time and dedication to prepare for this competition and the magistrates were consistently impressed with the team's resilience and ambition. We wish the team every success as they take on the next round at Reading Crown Court.

It has also been another impressive term for achievements for Year 9 in PE. Back in January, we witnessed the Berkshire Schools Cross Country Competition where Abigail of 9C came fourth in the county. Abigail will be representing Berkshire in the English Schools Cross Country Championships. She really is doing herself and the Holt School proud. As well as this the Year 9 Holt team qualified to represent Wokingham in the Badminton Schools Championships. Despite a narrow loss in the final, Jessica, Sanjana and Palak competed superbly and we are very proud of their efforts. In February, all Year 9 forms competed in an inter-house football tournament with 9W claiming the title of house champions. The Year 9 rugby team have also had a phenomenal term and were crowned county champions at a gruelling 100-minute match at Bisham Abbey just last week. Looking ahead with regards to PE, the beginning of the summer term marks the beginning of the long-awaited athletics season, and the restart of tennis and rounders clubs as well as the much-anticipated inter-house hockey tournament.

Last week Year 9 had their second presentation assembly of the academic year and it was wonderful to see the array of talent and skills. Not only were there lots of subjects, sports and competition certificates to award, but Year 9 also delivered some fantastic speeches and performances. Kimiya's piano solo captivated the audience whilst Kathryn delivered an outstanding rendition of I'm not that girl from the musical Wicked. The audience were also treated to interesting recounts of the February ski trip and WW1 battlefields trip: all of which sounded absolutely amazing.

As always, I find it difficult to pick just one highlight of the term when so many of our students work so hard to better themselves and our school. However, during the spring term, I have particularly enjoyed visiting all of the different Year 9 tutor groups during registration and observing them at work. So many of our students are flourishing by developing their leadership and communication skills. Students are talking about current affairs and forming opinions of their own about the world we live in. They are embracing what the school has to offer and this is helping them to develop into well-rounded members of the community which is what employers are seeking.

Attendance in Year 9 continues to be good for the majority of the year group however it is important that students attend school as frequently as they are able. Statistically speaking, there is a direct link between school attendance and academic attainment. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that students can self-medicate over-the-counter medicines such as lozenges, paracetamol and Nurofen to help with period pains, headaches or coughs. We continue to ask for your support in this matter to ensure our students get as much out of their education as they can.

The next focus for Year 9 will be the KS3 end-of-year examinations. Information about this will be issued to students and parents in due course. In order to get ahead, students can start to organise their class notes and go over materials from the beginning of the academic year. There are also lots of resources students can access via our virtual learning platform: Frog. It is important that students try their best in all of their subject areas and especially where they have received a 'not achieving' or 'working towards' grade on their last review.

I wish you and your family a very happy Easter break – we look forward to welcoming the students back on Monday 16th April.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Gemma L. Priddy
Head of Year 9