

4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian

### Re: Year 9 End of Spring Term

The Christmas holidays feel a lifetime ago, yet this term feels like it has flown by! The options process has been completed and students have selected their GCSE courses for next year. Thank you for your support at home through this potentially tense time for our students. The year group continue to work hard in all of their lessons and get involved in a number of excellent opportunities outside of lessons. There have been many subject led trips this term and below I have included sections from some of the speeches students gave in our end of term assembly:

On the Battlefields trip, where students visited several memorials, cemeteries and museums. *"The museum was incredibly interesting and had lots of interactive things, such as seeing how heavy some of the war grenades were, and experiencing what the WW1 dugouts were like. At around 10:30 we left the museum to go to some cemeteries. We went to a British one called Tyne Cot and then a German one called Langemark. Seeing both of these cemeteries really allowed us to put into perspective how many lives were lost. It was heart-breaking to see just how many grave stones had 'unknown' written on them."* Phoebe.

The Spanish department took a group of students to Granada. The group visited lots of markets and cultural landmarks. *"Our highlight was the flamenco dance show; the atmosphere was electric."* Malaika.

Technology ran a trip to a Design Museum in Kensington. *"The work shops were amazing as we could get hands on and touch all of the materials. They taught us about sustainability and our impact on the environment. We looked at how materials can be recycled and we learnt about a bin that had been made out of recycled chewing gum which was designed to encourage people to bin gum and not to litter."* Francesca.

The Magistrates students with Miss Harris and Miss Roberts have been working hard getting ready for the competition which was held at the Reading Crown Court. All schools are given a case with evidence where they have to prepare a defence and prosecution and go head to head against two other schools. The schools are then allocated points for the competence of their witnesses, the strength of their lawyers for their questions and speeches, the strengths of the allocated magistrates to interpret the evidence and put across an unbiased judgement. I was lucky enough to go and support the team on the day along with the Co-Heads. I knew that the girls would be amazing as they are a strong team and I had dropped in on a couple of rehearsals, but they didn't fail to amaze me with their outstanding performances. The Holt team came first runners up in the local heats and have progressed onto the regional final in May.

This term has been the business end of the sporting calendar in our winter seasonal sports. The strong year 9 cohort have been a formidable force in the local area competitions, and the roll of honour for this season is an impressive one!

- Netball A team SWIFT champions (local school netball league).
- U15 Football East Berkshire Football league winners.
- U15 Rugby Berkshire County Champions.
- U15 Hockey one defeat in seven games, Hockey festival Winners.
- U15 Cross-Country Reading and District league winners and represented Wokingham at English Schools.
- U15 Badminton local district tournament winners.

I am sure there are other sporting achievements that I could have added to my list, and I would like to congratulate all of the students who have represented the Holt this season and to all of the students who continue to participate in other talents such as sports outside of school, music, drama and all of the other

wonderful things you get up to in your free time. One of my favourite parts of my week is Friday lunch time, as I can swing past the sports hall where there is a recreational badminton club. The hall is packed with year 9s unwinding from the week, all enjoying some recreational sport with their friends and year group.

As the weather takes a milder turn the year 9 Conservation Team have sown the seeds for the wild flower meadow in which we aim to provide a habitat for our struggling bee population. A hose pipe rota is well on its way as we aim to get the garden established. The team also led an assembly to the rest of the year group on the aims of the project, the challenges bees face and the devastating impact it would have on humans if bee populations continue to decline. Bees rely on “corridors” or flowers to gather pollen and a vital corridor for bees is our gardens, which provide a concentrated source of flowers. So, if you would like to get on board with our plight to make a difference, now is the time to get sowing!

Finally, a quick reminder that when we return after Easter the summer uniform rules start. This means that students no longer have to wear tights and can instead wear black or navy ankle or trainer socks (they must not wear white socks or over the knee socks). If you would like more information please use the following link:  
<https://www.holtschool.co.uk/school-life/school-uniform/>

I hope you all have an enjoyable Easter break and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS Shephard', written in a cursive style.

Miss Shephard  
Head of Year 9