

18 December 2024

Dear Families

Re: End of Autumn Term 2024

As we approach the winter holidays, I write to reflect on the term that is ending and look ahead to the new year to come. It has been a huge term for us here at school, with the opening of our Primary Phase and welcoming our Ducklings, the first class in the Primary Phase of Bohunt Horsham and another step closer to being an all-through school. The excitement around the school today is palpable, as always, in the build up to our whole school Christmas lunch. Many of us are excited about Christmas and have a lovely winter break planned but some can find the expectations of this season difficult to manage. It is important to take the time to appreciate those who have helped or supported us and today is a great opportunity for us all to do just that. Christmas is a time of celebration but can also be exceptionally challenging for some of us and so we must be mindful of that even as the celebratory events take place this week.

Reflection

The last weeks of term are always jam-packed and I'd like to mention a couple of things that have really impressed me recently. First, our Christmas Market, which was so well attended and it was wonderful to see so many families enjoying themselves and getting into the festive spirit. We managed to raise over £2,000 for our four chosen charities too. My thanks to all involved.

Navya in Year 8 has proven herself a true game-changer this term, putting a huge amount of work into setting up Skate Club, which takes place on Fridays after school. Nav was relentless in her determination to get this done and the result is a wonderful club, full of staff and children, and is the embodiment of our vision to create young people who will see something they want to make better in the world around them and go out and make that happen. Nav didn't rest until her vision became a reality and I admire her so much.

On Friday 13 December we held our annual Winter Concert. Once again it was a huge privilege to be part of the audience and to enjoy seeing so many of our children from every year group take to the stage and showcase their musical talents, from original pieces to classical compositions and everything in between. The Main Hall was packed with friends, family, staff and children all brimming with pride and sharing in celebrating the hard work and dedication that goes into honing a talent in music but also the courage that it takes to step onto the stage.

Finally, as many of you know, Mr Jeffock has been very unwell this term and has sadly had to take the decision to leave teaching. I know you will join me in wishing him well on his recovery. Covering some of his lessons this term, we have been fortunate enough to have a languages specialist as a supply teacher who was previously a headteacher at a local independent school. Having spent a few days with us he remarked that we have 'the most polite children in Sussex'.

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I felt very proud because this former head has been working in schools across the county over the last year so he really has something to compare us to. He popped into my office at the end of term to tell me how much he enjoyed teaching our children. As I often tell you, we are so proud of our student body and we tell them all the time, but to hear it from an objective point of view from such an expert coming into the school means so much. Also moving on to new roles this term are Mr Butcher, who is ably replaced by Ms Tuncliffe as Curriculum Leader for Science, Ms Smith who is retiring and is replaced by Mr Jones-Taylor and Ms Brogan who is moving away for family reasons. We welcome back Ms Kenning, who is one of our SENDCos from maternity leave, she will be back working alongside Ms Richardson-Ball and Ms Simmonds.

Looking forward

Next term we continue our focus on **belonging** - helping children to find their place in school, in particular continuing to embed our four Communities and their new traditions and celebrations across the school year.

Participation - in particular, the drive on attendance and on participation in wider school opportunities especially as the days begin to get longer and lighter and **success**, in particular making sure that all children have the adaptations and feedback they need to challenge them in lessons or help them to be successful in lessons across the curriculum.

As with the end to every autumn term, we will finish early on Friday and our secondary children will leave at 1.40pm; children return on Tuesday 7 January, hopefully feeling rested and ready for the new term. The holidays should be about fun and relaxation, but also taking time to make sure that you are prepared and ready to come back to school with a positive mindset. There will be revision and mock exams for our Year 11s, another whole school production and various co-curricular trips and visits to look forward to and children will get the most benefit out of these if they are rested and have everything ready.

This term has felt very long and, at times, arduous, but now it is about to end there is part of me that feels wistful - so much has happened this term that needs to be remembered and celebrated and I would urge all our children to congratulate themselves on what they have achieved this term but particular congratulations must go to the Ducklings who have settled in far more quickly and easily than we ever imagined they would.

I hope you all have a peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

With best wishes

Ms Ayling

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Key dates:

6 January - INSET day - school closed to ALL children

7 January - First day of spring term - Humanutopia workshop for Year 11

14 January - Year 10 Success Workshops (details to follow)

16 January - Year 11 Parent/Carer consultation (virtual)

22 January - Year 8 Parent/Carer consultation (virtual)

4-7 February - High School Musical Jr school production

11 February - Year 8 Options Fair

13-19 February - Florida Trip

15-22 February - Ski Trip to Sestriere

17-21 February - Half term

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