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Headteacher – Mrs Kelly Osborne-James  
**24<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Colossians 4:6 “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone”.

Communication as you know has been a key thread in my work to secure rapid change and improvement. Thank you to those parents/carers who were able to attend the Tutor Evening on Wednesday. I received positive feedback from many parents and the staff truly valued your support. We hope you found the time useful.

In referencing the schools' strategic priorities, priority 1 being heavily focussed on Teaching and Learning, we have made significant steps forward in terms of securing purposeful networking links with other local secondary schools.

As well as securing professional networking opportunities and good practice sharing with teachers at SMRT, The Deanery hosted the Swindon Association of Secondary Head teachers meeting yesterday. I was able to meet with head teachers and principals from schools and colleges across Swindon where offers of support were given by many. This included opportunities for further moderation and revision support post-Christmas which will be an added benefit to our staff and consequently our students.

I can confirm that there has been additional financial investment in the premises and equipment, with all classes receiving additional chairs and tables to support the fluidity of the school day and the organisation within lessons. Additional CCTV cameras will also be installed inside the school building; every intention is for this to be completed before Christmas.

As headteacher, I am currently producing a Team around the Y11 Strategy which will identify further opportunities to support our young people achieve their very best and flourish over the next eight months. I will share the key aspects of this plan with Y11 parents over the coming weeks. This will take into account attendance, behaviour, targets, data and up to date assessment information.

I am also working swiftly to address cover by non-specialist teachers across the school. We have a dedicated team who work specifically to provide cover and they are working closely with our Deputy Head of Curriculum, SLT and Faculty Leads in the first instance, to ensure increasing consistency across all lessons. Recruitment is ongoing with more appointments made this week. I will send a staffing update before the end of this term.

This week, I have met with the Head of Y7, Mrs Showler. She has planned a visit to Christ Church where I will have the pleasure of playing the piano for their Advent and carols service. We have also booked a workshop (one day) to support the development of Y7 students' communication skills – more information to follow on both of these events. I will continue to detail specific year group plans to enrich the curriculum in the weekly updates.

Please can I also ask that if you would like your child to have a Christmas lunch on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, that you make your choice and pay on ParentPay as soon as possible. If your child is entitled to free school meals a cooked meal will be provided. This will allow our wonderful Deanery Kitchen staff to place the orders in good time. We are excited to see the children in their Christmas/favourite jumper on this day, and there will be prizes awarded for best tutor group, student and adult in school.

### Attendance

Whilst we have noted an improvement in morning punctuality, and we are grateful to families for the effort they are putting in to get their children in school on time, there is still more to do. We do appreciate that Swindon is full of roadworks at the moment. However, children who are not at school for 8.45am not only impact their own learning but the learning of others. Creating a pattern of regular attendance and punctuality is our collective responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff. Thank you for your continued support with this important focus.

## Pastoral

It was a pleasure to see so many parents and students in school for the tutor evening on Wednesday. The staff valued the time to be able to speak to you and develop the first point of contact relationships further.

We are also continuing to recognise the students' fantastic behaviour. This week we have awarded over **7500** house points. The top three categories for student achievement this week have been effort, punctual to lessons and classwork.

As we continue to strive for high standards, we will be tightening sanctions for students who do not wear full school uniform.

From Monday, any students who are in non-uniform without a note from parents with a genuine reason, will be issued a uniform slip at roll call and a L2 sanction from their tutor. If students then attend lessons with the slip, no further sanctions will be issued that day. However, if students go to lessons without a slip and in incorrect uniform, they will be sanctioned by the classroom teacher.

We are also keen for students to show they are ready to learn by having correct equipment. Having the basic equipment (including mathematical equipment) allows lessons to start promptly without extra distractions.

Where students attend lessons with the correct equipment, they will be rewarded with house points. However, if a student doesn't have equipment with them, the classroom teacher will be recording this on ClassCharts. It is important to note, that extra equipment will not be able to be provided for exams. Students eligible for financial support will be provided with equipment to support their education.

We recognise that some families are facing financial hardship at the moment for a host of reasons so if you cannot provide the correct school uniform or equipment, please do get in touch and we will do our best to help you with the utmost discretion.

Every blessing for the weekend and sincere thanks for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs. Osborne-James