

# Meopham School

A Member of Swale Academies Trust

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31 March 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of a very busy and successful term there are a few important points to share with you.

## Attendance

I am concerned that our overall attendance figures have been dropping over the past few weeks. Good attendance is vital if students are to achieve high quality outcomes. I do understand that there are rare occasions where a student is so unwell that they have to stay at home. However, I would ask you to support us in challenging your child to come into school, even if they do not feel completely well. Sometimes they do feel much better once they arrive. If a child really is too poorly to remain in school we will always telephone you to collect them.

In school, we are doing everything we can to work with the students to further improve. We have a number of competitions and initiatives run by tutors during form time to increase positive peer pressure. Where, for example, an entire form has maintained a 100% attendance record we allow them to have a free non-uniform day at the end of the following week. We have installed hospital-style hygienic hand rub at stations around the school to reduce the risk of infection. I have also asked form tutors to liaise directly with you when your child is absent from school. This is in addition to the monitoring of attendance which is completed by our Attendance Officer. Our attendance target of 96.2% is an ambitious one, but one I firmly believe we can achieve with your support.

## Uniform

The vast majority of students look incredibly smart in their uniforms, and are proud of their business-like appearance. As we move towards the summer months, I would like to remind parents about our expected standards of school uniform. For example, while skirts should be of a suitable length, they also should not be of Lycra or a similar stretchy material. As you are aware, trainers of any description are not acceptable school footwear. We would like to thank parents for their continued support in ensuring that students are wearing formal work shoes. Students are also expected to wear their blazers to and from school.

We would also like to remind you that our official supplier of uniform is The Sewing Shop, Echo Square, Gravesend. Unfortunately, we were recently informed that Longfield Wools has now ceased trading. We are aware that there are a number of unofficial suppliers of school uniform in the local area. We would advise you not to purchase your uniform from these shops as the quality of the clothing supplied is inferior to that supplied by The Sewing Shop.

## Year 11 Easter Revision Classes

We have put in place a number of measures already to ensure all our Year 11 students have the best possible chance of success in the summer. We will be repeating our well attended and successful programme of Easter revision classes. Curriculum leaders have been identifying the students who would most benefit from attending. Letters have been sent to the parents of any student invited to one of these sessions. I look forward to hearing about their success. In the past, students have enjoyed the more relaxed and informal atmosphere of these revision classes which have, in turn, deepened their understanding and knowledge.

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ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN A RURAL SETTING

## Year 11 Study Leave

This year, Year 11 study leave will begin on the afternoon of Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. On this day, and after the Statistics exam in the morning, our lovely tradition of celebration for Year 11s will take place. This traditionally happens when the majority of the final GCSE exams have been sat. This year we would like to invite Year 11 to stay after their Statistics exam in the morning for an afternoon of celebration. We expect them to be in their full school uniform, with a spare shirt of course for signing! The "Leavers' Celebration" will begin at 11.30 a.m. in the main hall and start with a BBQ and music. We will then celebrate the year with a leavers' presentation and year book assembly led by Mr Vilday. Students should leave the school site at the end of the celebration event at 1.30 p.m.

## Train to Teach at Meopham School

Have you ever considered a career in teaching? Meopham School firmly believes that the way to secure top quality teaching staff is to grow our own. To this end, we are always seeking to hear from graduates who are passionate about developing young people's minds. If you are interested in finding out about this opportunity, please contact Elizabeth Frost, School Direct Leader, by e-mail [SchoolDirect@westlands.kent.sch.uk](mailto:SchoolDirect@westlands.kent.sch.uk) or telephone on 07496 972 623.

## Charity Events

### Save the Children – Christmas Jumper Day

I am pleased to say that we raised £195.00 for "Save the Children" by wearing our Christmas Jumpers with school uniform in Term 2.

### World Book Day

Well done to Miss Smith, in the English Department, who organised a Book Drive for World Book Day to collect books for Demelza Hospice Care for Children. She received an overwhelming 2,000 books from students and staff.



The generosity of the students, families and staff exceeded the initial 200-300 book target. Several students went above and beyond to collect the books. Amber, in Year 11, spent a weekend visiting relatives and collecting their books, raising an incredible 250 books for the school. Two girls in Year 8 went collecting along their road and around their local area. They managed to collect over 500 books for the charity.

A representative from Demelza Hospice Care for Children came to collect the books and meet some of the children involved, explaining to them the work that the hospice carries out in the local area for not only children with severe illnesses but also their families. Katherine Cordrey, who works for the charity, said *"Thank you to all of the students at Meopham School who have spent their time collecting and donating books for Demelza. As a charity, not part of the NHS, Demelza is reliant on fundraising, donations and gifts in Wills to raise over £10.5million needed every year to provide care to seriously ill children and their family. The books that the students of Meopham School have collected will be used in our hospice in Kent and Eltham and also to stock our shops to help raise vital funds for Demelza Hospice."*



## Swalefest

Over the last term, fifteen of our Year 7-10 pupils have been working on an oracy based project for the forthcoming student Swalefest event (an event involving all of the Swale Academies Trust schools). The students have completed two days off timetable in which they have created a Meopham School exhibition to be shown at the summer event in June. The students have also taken part in numerous other discussion activities relating to the themes of Mental Health and well-being as well as Student Voice. We have recently hosted a successful student exchange with The

North School whereby ten Year 10 students shadowed our own students and met with me. The students working on this project have showed a massive amount of maturity and dedication.

### **Learn to Lead**

At the start of the academic year Miss Crockford and Miss Miles invited five pupils from Year 8 to get involved with a Learn to Lead project. The five pupils and three other schools in the Trust came together for a training day by the Learn to Lead team demonstrating how to become leaders themselves.

Learn to Lead is a programme to improve schools by students having their own opinion. It enables people to work together in teams to bring about the positive changes they wish for, and individuals grow in confidence, self-esteem and ownership. Following from this training day, our five pupils ran their own training day for the whole of Year 8, where they all came up with ideas of teams they would like to set up to improve the school community. They completed a survey to find out what areas needed to be improved upon. Further training days have taken place and we are now in the process of the teams becoming active within the school community.

The teams are:

- Pastoral Kidz - the pupils said they would like a student based pastoral team to help with some of the everyday school difficulties that occur;
- Just Raise it - a team based on raising money for charity and fundraising for the school;
- Games R Us - which is a social group put together for those pupils who lack social skills and would like to join in with fun activities to help build their confidence.

These teams are ideas from the pupils themselves, and with some support from teachers they will lead the teams around the school community, making them feel equal to all teachers and staff. We are hoping by the end of this academic year that these teams are all up and running within the school community for the rest of the school to use and enjoy.

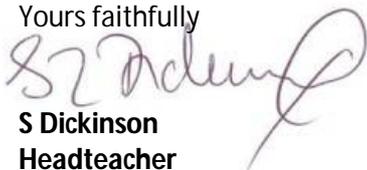
### **Parent View – Ofsted Questionnaire**

I would like to thank those of you who have filled in our parent survey forms when you have attended the school for parents' evenings this year. We enter your answers into Survey Monkey which enables us to analyse responses. We also regularly survey the students at the school in order to evaluate how pupils see their school.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of Parent View. Ofsted also make use of the online Parent View service to gather information from parents (<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>, or via the Meopham School Website Parent tab, Ofsted Parent View - external). We are proud of our school and our students, and would encourage you to complete this "official" online questionnaire as it will assist those outside of the school in evaluating our overall effectiveness.

I would finally like to wish all students, staff, parents and carers within the Meopham School community best wishes for a restful Easter break. Term 5 begins for students on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

Yours faithfully



**S Dickinson**  
**Headteacher**

## Term Dates 2016-17

### Term 5

**Term 5 Starts:** Tuesday 18 April 2017

**Term 5 Ends:** Friday 26 May 2017

*Staff Development Day:* Friday 28 April 2017

*Holiday:* Monday 29 May 2017 to Friday 2 June 2017

### Term 6

**Term 6 Starts:** Monday 5 June 2017

**Term 6 Ends:** Monday 24 July 2017

*Staff Development Days:* Monday 3 July 2017  
Monday 24 July 2017

## Term Dates 2017 – 2018

### Term 1

**Term 1 Starts:**

***Staff Development Day:* Tuesday 29 August 2017**

The new term begins for Years 7, 11 and 12 on Wednesday, 30 August 2017.

Years 8, 9, 10 and 13 return to school on Thursday 31st August 2017.

**Term 1 Ends:** Friday 13 October 2017

**Holiday:** Monday 16 October 2017 to Friday 27 October 2017

### Term 2

**Term 2 Starts:** Monday 30 October 2017

**Term 2 Ends:** Wednesday 20 December 2017

***Staff Development Day:* Friday 24 November 2017**

**Holiday:** Thursday 21 December 2017 to Wednesday 3 January 2018