

Friday, 20 October 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope you are all well and ready for the half-term break. I will begin as always by directing you to our fantastic Facebook page (with over 1800 followers!) to see so many highlights of another busy but successful TSS term. There you will see articles about how our sports teams are doing, STEM club, Open Evening, Black History Month, careers events, TA appreciation day and much, much more. You will also find safety tips and advice on issues such as vaping and e-safety. It really is worth checking out.

Our new Year 7s make a fantastic start

Following on from their amazing induction days back in July, on Monday, 4 September 2023 we welcomed our new Year 7s into the school as fully fledged TSS students. I am not alone when I say that I feel the start they have made to secondary school has been nothing short of fantastic. It's a big challenge moving from primary to secondary school but they have made it look easy. They have the best attendance in the school and, at the time of writing this, they have well over 10,000 achievement points to their names, which is nearly 20 per pupil. I know Ms Moss, along with Mrs La-Haye and Mr Jones, want me to pass on their congratulations too. Well done Year 7, you have had a phenomenal start to your time here and I look forward to it continuing when we return. I hope all the Year 7s have a great half-term break; they thoroughly deserve it!

Open Evening and Morning Tour positivity

As is part of life in a successful secondary school, September and October are busy months for promoting the school to prospective students in Year 6. On Thursday, 21 September 2023 we had our Open Evening which was incredibly well attended. Whilst I was inundated with lovely emails from visitors complimenting the school and the staff, my favourite emails were the ones saying such lovely things about our student guides and helpers. The Sittingbourne School is full of kind and helpful students so it's very pleasing when other people get to see what I do on a daily basis. If your child was one of our guides or helpers, you should be very proud of them and please pass on my thanks.

We followed up our Open Evening with three weeks worth of tours so that pupils and parents get to see the school in action. As with the Open Evening, it was great to receive so many positive comments from visitors. Parents/carers were impressed with how calm and orderly the school was and were thrilled by the lessons they got to go and see.

The feedback from these tours got us thinking about how we can offer the same opportunity to see the school in action for parents/carers who already have children in the school. For most

parents/carers, the only time you get to come in and see the school in action is before your child starts here. Therefore, next term we'll be offering tours to parents/carers so they can get a better understanding of what a day in the life of TSS is like. Details will be coming out after half term so keep your eyes peeled.

Attendance and punctuality updates

In my assemblies this term I have been repeating the message that attendance is one of the biggest factors influencing success in the end of school exams in Years 11 and 13. Thank you to all the parents/carers who have been encouraging their children to attend school even when they want to stay at home. The NHS have provided a useful guide for parents and carers about what to do if your child has a range of illnesses or ailments. The guide can be found [here](#).

As you will see, for the majority of illnesses it is ok for your child to still attend school. However, if you are unsure, please call the attendance office to get advice and guidance.

With regards to COVID-19, the guidance states that a child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. However, if the child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test. Please make sure that any tests used are within their use by date as out of date tests can give false results.

Please note, we are moving our attendance team to the school reception, so it is easier for parents to come and speak to them, if they have any questions, concerns or information they want to share with regards to their child's attendance.

Uniform expectations

As the warm weather has left us for the next few months, I would like to remind parents/carers that students are expected to wear their school blazers in school. All students must wear their blazer whilst they move around the school site. Whilst in class, teachers will allow students to place their blazers on the back of their chairs. As it gets colder, some students may choose to wear a school jumper. Jumpers are optional, but if they are being worn they must be plain (no logos or prints), navy blue, wool (or wool like material) and a v-neck. Crew neck jumpers, sweatshirts and hoodies, regardless of colour or material, are not allowed. If they are worn they will be confiscated. Please note that jumpers cannot be worn instead of a blazer, only underneath it. We appreciate your support in this matter. The school uniform policy can be found [here](#).

If any parent or carers need support in providing their child with the correct uniform, please contact your child's year team who will be happy to help.

Mobile Phones and Electronics reminder

As I shared in my letter in July, our Mobile Phone and Electronics policy can be found [here](#). Following the Minister for Education's statement at the start of the month that she wants to issue full bans on mobile phones in all schools, I want to remind all parents and carers that whilst we don't have a total ban on phones at TSS at present, there are restrictions in place. Mobile phones must

not be seen or heard during lesson time or moving between lessons. They are only allowed to be used in designated areas at break and lunch times. I would like to draw parents/carers attention to point nine of the policy that states the following:

9. Parents/carers are politely asked to not call or message their child during the school day. Parents/carers who want to contact their child should call the school. We also ask that parents/carers discourage their child from calling or messaging them during the school day. Accepting a call or reading a message from a parent/carer during lesson time or outside of a designated area may result in the child's phone being confiscated.

Headteacher Surgery

I will be holding another Headteacher Surgery on Wednesday, 8 November 2023 from 3.30pm to 6.30pm. If you would like to come and speak to me about any questions, concerns or issues you may have regarding your child's education here at TSS, please call reception to make an appointment. Meeting slots are 10 minutes long each. I look forward to seeing some of you then.

Thank you

I would like to end by saying a massive thank you to all the TSS staff who are the most dedicated, talented and hardworking staff of any school I have worked in. We are all very lucky to have them here at TSS and the job they do in making it a great place to learn for our students.

Whatever you have planned, I wish you all an enjoyable half term break. I look forward to seeing all the students back in school on Monday, 30 October 2023 at 8.35am.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smith'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a smaller 'S'.

Mr N Smith
Headteacher

2023-24 term dates

Term 1:

Students return:

Monday 4 September 2023: Years 7 and 11 only; Year 13 (8.35am) & Year 12 enrolment (11.10am)

Tuesday 5 September 2023 (all other year groups)

Staff development days: Friday 1 September 2023 and Friday 22 September 2023

Term 1 ends: Friday 20 October 2023

School holiday: Monday 23 October to Friday 27 October 2023

Term 2

Term 2 starts: Monday 30 October 2023

Staff development day: Monday 27 November 2023

Term 2 ends: Friday 15 December 2023

School holiday: Monday 18 December to Friday 29 December 2023

Term 3

Bank Holiday: Monday 1 January 2024

Staff Development Day: Tuesday 2 January 2024

Students return: Wednesday 3 January 2024

Term 3 ends: Friday 9 February 2024

School holiday: Monday 12 February to Friday 16 February 2024

Term 4

Term 4 starts: Monday 19 February 2024

Term 4 ends: Thursday 28 March 2024

Bank Holiday: Friday 29 March 2024

School holiday: Monday 1 April to Friday 12 April 2024

Term 5

Term 5 starts: Monday 15 April 2024

Bank holiday: Monday 6 May 2024

Term 5 ends: Friday 24 May 2024

School holiday: Monday 27 May to Friday 31 May 2024

Term 6

Term 6 starts: Monday 3 June 2024

Staff Development Day: Friday 28 June 2024

Term 6 ends: Tuesday 23 July 2024