

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope you are all well and ready for the Christmas holiday. As always I will begin by pointing you in the direction of our fantastic Facebook page to see so many highlights of daily life here at TSS. There you will see posts about a trip to the pantomime in Canterbury, the Sixth Formers team building days at Ninja Warrior and The Panic Room and our participation in an inter-school STEM competition, as well as parental guidance on what they need to know about keeping their child safe with Disney Plus and X (formerly known as Twitter). Head over to Facebook and search for The Sittingbourne School to find out more.

End of term festivities

As you would expect, we have ended the term with a lot of Christmas spirit. This week alone we have had rewards assemblies, an attendance prize afternoon, Christmas lunch and Christmas jumper day. However, my personal highlight of the last few weeks has been the school Christmas production of Frozen. As I am sure many of you who saw it will testify, it was a fantastic show. From the costumes and staging to the students' performances everything was, in the words of my 10-year-old-daughter, "amazing". Well done to the fantastic cast and crew who did themselves, and the school, incredibly proud. I'm already looking forward to next year's production!

Teaching & Learning

As the teachers and students here will testify, one of my most often used phrases is "teaching and learning is our core business". So it's been very pleasing to see such fantastic teaching and learning continuing to take place around the school this term. Following on from Ofsted's judgement that the quality of education we offer our students is good, it's been lovely to get further recognition of the job we do. Last month we were informed by the Department for Education that our Sports Studies results and Health & Social Care results from this summer are in the top 20% of all schools nationally. This is a fantastic achievement and a real testament to the great job done by the teachers in those subjects. As the quality of teaching continues to get better and better, I am confident we will see more subjects appearing in the top 20% and higher in the years to come.

Attendance

As all teachers will tell you, one of the biggest factors affecting a student's performance in exams is their attendance. This has recently been reinforced in a report from the Children's

Commissioner that was published in November, titled "Missing Children, Missing Grades". One of the report's findings was that children with attendance of 95% or above had almost an 8 out of 10 chance of achieving five good pass grades including English and Maths. Whereas, students with attendance below 90% have only a 3 in 10 chance of passing the same qualifications. Our own evidence supports this report. The TSS students who sat their GCSE exams last summer who had 95% or above attendance achieved in line with students nationally, including those at grammar and private schools. Whereas the students with attendance of below 80% achieved on average almost two grades lower than other students. It's for this reason that we will continue to do all we can to get students into school but we can't do it alone. We need help from every parent and carer to make sure their children are in school as much as possible, even when sometimes they would rather just stay at home. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Uniform reminders

As we enter the Christmas holidays we know that a lot of students will get new clothes and jewellery for Christmas. Consequently, I would like to ask for your help in preventing your child from arriving at school in trainers, hoodies, piercings or sweatshirts in January. As I wrote a few weeks back, we really don't want to have to confiscate clothing in the cold weather so we ask that the students don't wear it in school in the first place.

Parking

Those of you who pick your children up from school will have noticed that we are now dismissing students via the exit gate at the front of the school. This has been done for safety reasons as the pavement by that gate is wider meaning students are less likely to have to walk in the road. It is also where the yellow zig zags are painted which means students are able to cross the road without being impeded by parked cars. Therefore, can I please remind all parents/carers to not park on the yellow zig zags. Parking there can endanger a child's life so please, even though it might mean parking a bit further away, please don't park on the yellow zig zags. Can you please also keep showing consideration to our neighbours and not block driveways, paths or roads when you park and wait for your child.

Thank you

I would like to end by saying a massive thank you to all the wonderful TSS staff for another term of hardwork and dedication to making sure every child gets the very best education possible. As I keep telling them, we are lucky to have them here at The Sittingbourne School and the job they do in making it a great place to learn for our students.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to you for your continued support of the school. I would especially like to thank all the parents/carers who take the time to email me to thank the school for the work we do. Your kind words go a long way.

I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and restful break. I look forward to seeing all the students back in school on Wednesday, 3 January 2024.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large capital 'N' followed by a period and a cursive signature that appears to be 'Smith'.

Mr N Smith
Headteacher