

Friday, 24 May 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

End of term letter - May 2024

I hope you are all well and looking forward to the bank holiday weekend. As another term comes to an end, there is so much to celebrate here at The Sittingbourne School. Please remember to check out our Facebook page (just search for The Sittingbourne School) where you'll see posts on our Hair & Beauty Showcase at our Skills Centre; our new Engineering T-level; Year 10 work experience, the Italian ski trip, Year 7's rugby tournament, our community prom wardrobe and much, much more.

Exam Season

I would like to say a huge well done to our Year 11 and Year 13 students who have begun their crucial GCSE, A Level and BTEC exams. Their dedication and hard work has drawn praise from so many staff and visitors. Exams aren't meant to be easy and we all know the stress and anxiety they can bring which is why I have been so impressed with the positive attitude and effort shown by so many of our students. Effort like this will undoubtedly bring the great results the students deserve.

Uniform

As I am sure many of you have heard from your children, we have been having a clamp down on uniform infringements over the past few weeks. The most common issues we wanted to tackle were students wearing trainers instead of shoes, students not wearing a tie, students wearing jewellery and students wearing very short skirts. I believe that a strong school uniform policy plays a vital role in fostering a positive and purposeful learning environment. High standards of uniform go beyond simply neat clothes; they contribute to a sense of belonging, community spirit, and a focus on education. It's for the latter reason that I am most determined that we get it right. I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our staff who have been working diligently to ensure high standards are maintained across all aspects of school life. I would also like to thank the many parents who have contacted the school offering their support in this matter. If there is a reason for your child not having the correct uniform that you need our support with, please don't hesitate to contact your child's year team.

Ofsted update

It's hard to believe that it's a year ago since our most recent Ofsted report was published that highlighted so many of the positive things that take place here at The Sittingbourne School, including our, "high aspirations for what all pupils can learn and achieve", that "Pupils are

proud of how tolerant and supportive their school is" how "Pupils are well focused in lessons" and that "Movement around the site is settled".

However, the report also outlines three targets for us to improve on. I am proud to say that for our target to increase the proportion of pupils studying the Ebacc suite of subjects, we have already seen a 25% increase in the number of students who will be studying these subjects next year. For the target of reducing our suspensions we have seen nearly a 10% decrease on the same point last year. This is at a time when many schools both locally and nationally are seeing an increase in pupil suspensions. Our final target was to reduce the proportion of students who are persistently absent (who have attendance below 90%). Whilst there is still some way to go, the proportion of our students who are persistently absent has reduced by half compared to the same time two years ago. Overall, we are very happy with the progress we are making. However, if you have any feedback on what we could do better, please contact reception who will pass it on to me.

Timings of the day

Looking ahead to September, we are looking to implement a minor change to the school day with the aim of providing our students with even more valuable learning time. The school day currently starts at 8.35am and ends at 3.05pm. From September, we are looking to start at 8.35am but end at 3.10pm. By adding five minutes to the end of the day and by moving the timings of other aspects of the school day, we can add an extra 75 minutes of lesson time over the week. We believe this additional time will be beneficial for student progress and maximising their outcomes. Whilst I believe this will have a hugely positive impact on your child's education, I would appreciate hearing from you on the matter. If you have a view on this that you would like to share, please email tss-consultation@swale.at by Friday, 7 June 2024. I look forward to hearing your views.

Policy updates

In our most recent Local Governing Body meeting, the following updated policies were approved. Please click on the policy name to be redirected to the policy:

[Behaviour policy](#)

[Mobile phone and electronic devices policy](#)

[Discrimination, Racism and Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

It is important to note that under the direction of the Department for Education, we will be introducing a stricter mobile phone policy in July. In order to prevent any disruption to learning and to reduce instances of unkind behaviour via electronic communication, if a student brings a mobile phone or other electronic devices to school, it must be switched off and kept out of sight in their school bag once the student is on the school premises. It cannot be used at any point during the school day including break time and lunchtime. It cannot be used anywhere on the school site including the canteen, playgrounds, fields and toilets. It cannot be used for any reasons, including (but not limited to) contacting home, checking the time or taking photos of learning materials.

We appreciate that parents/carers will have a lot of questions on this new policy so we will be hosting a range of events for parents and carers to hear the reasoning behind the change

and to ask questions. These will take place in school (both during and after school) and online. Details of these events will be shared early next term.

Wonderful staff

As always, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our outstanding staff. Their dedication and commitment to our students is truly remarkable. They are, without a doubt, some of the most hardworking individuals in the country.

A polite reminder

Finally, a reminder for parents and carers who pick children up after school. Please remember to park considerately with respect for our neighbours. Can parents/carers please also avoid using our neighbour's driveways to turn around as this is understandably causing some frustration when it happens. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping the local area safe and accessible for everyone.

Whatever you have planned, I hope you all have a relaxing and enjoyable break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back to The Sittingbourne School on Monday, 3 June 2024.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smith'.

Mr N Smith
Headteacher