



Prince Henry's Grammar School

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TRUST



Newsletter

February 2024

This half term has been very short but very sweet, and is one which will hold some very treasured memories for me as I got to take part (as a member of the pit band) in last week's school production of *The Addams Family*. As some of you may know, I am a keen violinist, having studied music at a Conservatoire, and have had the privilege of playing some amazing music in some impressive venues, but this school gig topped the lot! It was certainly an ambitious project both in acting and musical terms, and I was so impressed with the dedication, talent, confidence and resilience which some 120 students, as well as staff, demonstrated over many months of rehearsals. Audiences over four performances were left stunned and inspired, and the final night's resounding standing ovation was well deserved. Many colleagues and parents who came to watch commented that they would have paid theatre prices for what they had just experienced, and the pride in the hall, and particularly personally, was overwhelming. Well done to all cast and crew for a great start to 2024 – somehow productions get better and better every year, though I am not sure how in this case. I very much look forward to next year!

One of the best parts of this job is seeing students flourish in school and I very much respect, and am deeply grateful for, the amount of hours which colleagues put into providing the opportunities for students to achieve their ambitions, whether it is on stage, out on the pitch, in the community or in a more controlled environment. To explore and take risks is such an enriching experience which develops skills on a different level. In fact, as Mark Zuckerberg said "The biggest risk is not taking any risk.... In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks". Of course, it does depend on whether that risk is a positive one rooted in respect, but taking that for granted, there is no greater accomplishment than experiencing an adventure and embracing every challenge that comes your way. We are lucky to have such a plethora of activities on offer at PHGS, and so many students who rise to challenges presented who will certainly make their mark on the world. Hopefully they will come back as one of our "Prince Henry's People" in time, and tell us about their journey and, in turn, inspire the next generation. I can't wait to hear more....

As we continue to develop opportunities to strengthen communication further, we love to hear your feedback, both constructively and especially where thanks are passed on, so please continue to use email and phone calls to speak with relevant members of staff. I also hold a termly 'SLT Open Access' session so that parents and carers can come and raise anything they wish. We always try to be as positive and solution focussed as possible and appreciate the same from you. Please do be respectful about which channels are most appropriate and keep in mind that the increase in the complexity and frustrations of the world we now live in often bring the need for honest, frank communication. We will always do our best to resolve any issues, but we are not alone in that schools, now referred to as 'the third emergency service', have limited external support mechanisms and ever-increasing and diverse needs. Thank you for understanding that in our drive to have the highest expectations of all our students - whether that is in attendance, achievement or attitude - there may be different perspectives and understanding between home and school. I promise you that we share the very best of intentions in wanting what is best for students, whether that is in the short term or long term.

With that in mind, I hesitate to mention the impending weather forecast which, at this point suggests snow! Let's hope it holds off until half term. Students need some fun in their well-earned break. Enjoy the half-term holiday.

Best wishes

Sally Bishop
Headteacher

Key Stage 3 news

A short half term has seen Key Stage 3 students pack in a huge number of activities! **Year 7** have begun their form group charity fundraising challenge. We look forward to the usual array of activities as we support two great causes in Parkinson's UK and Leeds Hug on a Tray.

Year 8 students have embarked on a form group project looking at how news organisations operate and the threat of disinformation. They will be submitting their final work to the BBC Young Reporter project.

Year 9 students have been actively engaged in the Options process, with a well-attended Options Evening, Year 9 exams and taster sessions helping to inform their subject choices, supported by this week's online Progress Evening.

It has been a pleasure to welcome Mr Gracey to the KS3 Pastoral Team as Year Manager for Year 9. Please do get in touch with your child's Year Manager should you have any questions or concerns.

Mr S Day
Key Stage 3 Director

Key Stage 4 news

Year 10 students have made an encouraging start to 2024 and settled well into their GCSE studies. Parents/carers will receive the second Year 10 Progress Report next half term indicating progress, Minimum Estimated Attainment (MEA) and predicted grades. Year 10 Progress Evening (26th March) will be an invaluable opportunity to meet online with subject teachers to discuss your child's progress.

Year 11 students will complete additional trial examinations in English, Maths and Science between Monday 19th and Thursday 29th February 2024. A copy of the timetable and other details sent out by Mr Fishburn can be found on our website [here](#). On Friday 22nd March students will have the chance to discuss their predicted results with teaching staff and see if they meet the entry requirements of their chosen sixth form courses. This process aims to focus students on the upcoming exams and spur them on to even greater achievements.

Exam timetables (once published), study guides, revision tips and revision timetables can all be found on our website [here](#).

Mr S Knight
Key Stage 4 Director



Personalising the curriculum

The **Year 9** Options process draws to a close this Friday (9th Feb), when students are expected to have submitted their completed Options form online. I hope that you and your child have felt supported and informed throughout this process. You will receive an invitation to provide feedback on the process at the end of this week.

Year 11 students who are considering furthering their education in our sixth form are currently undergoing interviews with the sixth form team.

It is our intention that both Year 9 and Year 11 students will receive written confirmation of the availability of their choices by Easter.

Mr A Fishburn
Assistant Headteacher: Learning Facilitator (Acting)



School uniform

As you may be renewing uniform at this midpoint in the year, we would like to remind students and parents/carers of our uniform expectations. Staff will be having a focus on uniform misdemeanours and sanctioning students where expectations are not met from the first day back after the half-term holiday. Our full uniform expectations can be found on the school website [here](#). I would ask for particular attention to be paid to the following key areas where, for a number of students, improvement is needed:

- ◆ Skirts - must be navy and a traditional tailored school skirt. This means without pleats and not a pull-on Lycra skirt. Skirts must be worn no more than a hand's width above or below the knee (further clarification of this slight change will be provided later this week).
- ◆ Make-up - This is not to be worn by students in KS3. Acrylic nails or false eyelashes are not allowed in any year group.

Students will receive negative comments and sanctions will be applied where students do not meet expectations.

Mr S Clarkson
Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes

Sixth Form next steps support

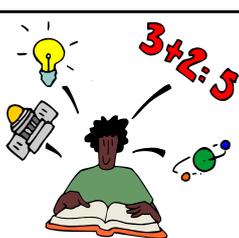
During the recent PSHE Day, **Year 12** students completed an 'Apprentice' style challenge focusing on the type of group activities used at assessment centres by graduate recruiters, as well as covering some aspects of the PSHE curriculum. Throughout the rest of this term, students will be using Unifrog to look at next steps and collating further evidence for their personal statement or CV, in preparation for the full programme of HE and Careers support which will start in the summer term.

Our Higher Education and Alternatives Information Evening takes place on Wednesday 20th March 2024, where parents and students can find out more about the UCAS application process, as well as alternative options such as apprenticeships. Invitations to this event will be sent out after the half-term holiday.

Year 13 students spent time on the recent PSHE Day looking at effective revision in preparation for the trial exams, which run from Wednesday 6th to Friday 15th March 2024 (see timetable [here](#)), before taking part in a range of 'life skills' activities, from cooking through to managing exam stress. Students not applying to university are reminded that they can book appointments with the careers advisor through the Sixth Form office to discuss options and next steps.

Mrs C Willis

Assistant Headteacher: Post 16 Learning



External examinations summer 2024

All Year 11 and 13 students will soon receive a personalised exam information booklet explaining the processes and systems designed to support them, along with their personalised exam timetable. You may also be interested in this [DfE guide](#) for students on coping with exam pressure.

Mr M Stone

Executive Officer: Exams, Assessment & Curriculum

SEND newsletter

Please see [here](#) for the latest edition of our online SEND newsletter (published each half term).

Mrs R Hunter

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

PUNCTUALITY MATTERS



ON TIME

All students should be in school no later than **8.25am**.



LATE

Students who arrive after **8.30am** will be marked as late (L).



UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Students who arrive after **9.00am** will be marked as a (U) code which is unauthorised absence - this has a significant impact on attendance.

Excellent punctuality is vital for success at school and to the establishment of positive life habits needed for life beyond school. Students should be on site no later than 8.25am and all gates are locked at 8.27am. Students arriving at the Farnley Lane entrance after 8.27am will be required to walk around to the Newall Carr entrance and enter the site via the Main School Office.

If a student arrives after 9.00am they will be issued with a U code and this means they will have a mark of unauthorised absence for the morning. As such, they will only have 50% attendance for the day.

Mr L Wilson

Assistant Headteacher: Learner Support and Lead DSL

School detentions

Last year, we added a Friday night SLT detention for (the very small number of) students who choose to miss a regular Tuesday/Thursday after-school detention. This deterrent has had a positive impact on student attendance to detentions.

To further encourage students to attend the regular detention at the time scheduled, and meet our behaviour expectations when present, we have decided that the Friday SLT detention will increase in length from after the half-term holiday, with students requiring such a sanction now remaining in detention until 4.30pm.

Mr S Clarkson

Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes

This term's 'Inside Stories' blog post, available [here](#), has been written by Mr Wilson (Assistant Headteacher) and focusses on national concerns surrounding school attendance and absence rates.

Recent year group assemblies have included a focus on Holocaust Memorial Day, with students undertaking further learning in EPR lessons to explore the extreme consequences of prejudice and intolerance.

#Free2Bme
@phgs

All students in Year 8 recently took part in workshops provided by the Anne Frank Trust to look at the issue of transphobia, and to consider what they can do to promote an inclusive, respectful culture in our school.

We are now starting to plan for our annual Equality & Diversity Week (8th - 12th July 2024). If you think that you could contribute, or know someone who might (e.g. as a guest speaker), please do contact me at school.

Mr C Lillington
Assistant Headteacher: Community and Ethos



Arbor

Arbor update

Please make a point of checking the Arbor Parent App regularly as we continue to increase our use of this electronic platform. All home learning tasks, student timetables, school detentions and reward stamps can currently be viewed in Arbor.

Very shortly we will also be moving Positive Discipline negative comments (which are currently written in the Student Planner) across to Arbor. This will allow more instant access for you to track how your child has behaved during the school day. More details about this change will follow in a separate letter later this week.

Mr S Clarkson
Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes



Please remember to top up your child's lunch card online. This will help us to avoid queues at the re-valuation machine at the start of the half term. A reminder that you can set up an alert on Scopay to tell you when your child's balance is running low. Select the 'Alerts' option from the menu.

Term Dates for 2024-2025 can be found on our website [here](#).

Forthcoming dates

Holidays

Close	Re-open
09 Feb 2024	19 Feb 2024
28 Mar 2024	15 Apr 2024

Events

08 Feb 2024	NSPCC Online Safety session for parents/carers
08 Feb 2024	Year 12 Higher Education Information Eve (early applicants)
10 Feb 2024	Community Education Workshops
19 Feb 2024	Year 11 Core trial exams start
06 Mar 2024	Year 13 trial exams start
13 Mar 2024	Year 8 Progress Evening (online)
20 Mar 2024	Year 12 Higher Education and Alternatives to HE Information Eve
22 Mar 2024	Year 11 Predicted Results Ceremony
26 Mar 2024	Year 10 Progress Evening (online)
28 Mar 2024	Prince Henry's Bands' Night



Sustainability news

In order to support sustainable, healthy lifestyles, students in Years 7 and 8 will shortly be offered the opportunity to take part in 'Bikeability' cycle training. Look out for an email early next half term for further details.

Please consider making use of our school uniform recycling bank if you have unwanted uniform/PE kit or want to see what items are available for a small donation to our school charities.

As part of our work with Otley 2030, we are pleased to draw attention to the new *Otley Community Larder*, which distributes fresh foods which are close to, or just beyond, their 'best before' date. The scheme is open to everyone and reduces waste whilst providing nutritious foods to local people on a 'pay as you feel' basis. See [here](#) for further details.

Mr C Lillington
Assistant Headteacher: Community and Ethos



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