



Funding Pressures

We had a very positive start to the new year last week and it was pleasing to see so many new students. Our roll has risen to 740 which is the largest I think it has been. I mention this because our funding is directly linked to the number of students we have on roll the previous September, so this increase should affect our income next year. Conversely, the lower figure last year – when the small year group reached Year 11 and we had a slight drop in numbers joining the Sixth Form – affected our income for this year.

It often puzzles people that headteachers say they are facing cuts and ministers say that they are spending more on education. Although this seems to be a contradiction, both are actually correct. The issue is that the amount of money that schools do have available to spend has been falling due to pay rises and increased pension and national insurance costs, as well as inflation. There has been more of this over the summer: a pay rise for teachers was announced which was larger than the 1% cap that had been in place for eight years. Some of this is to be funded by the government but the first 1% is not, and so we have to find that money immediately. Similarly, there was mention in the news at the weekend that there is likely to be a large increase in employers' pension contributions from next year and the school is an employer.

So while we managed to balance our budget this year it seems likely that we will face the same pressures again next year.

Year 7

We hope that our Year 7 students have enjoyed their first two weeks and have settled in. They certainly seem very bright and bubbly! We have a parents evening on 30 October when we hope you will be able to meet their form tutor and discuss progress by then. In the meantime, if there are any issues please contact the relevant House office in the first instance.

This morning we have a short liturgy to formally welcome them to school and mark the start of their education journey with us. We hope that this will be a milestone event in their time with us.

Diocesan Schools' Mass

Each September all of the schools in the diocese come together for a Mass in the cathedral in Norwich. This year's Mass is next Friday and our student chaplaincy team will be attending to represent us. It promises to be an uplifting occasion. (Last year we were leading the music so this year it will be nice to leave this to others!)

Marking of students' work

As you may know, the government recently reviewed teacher workload with the aim of significantly reducing it. Schools have been asked to implement any of the recommended strategies that they believe would reduce teacher workload yet still maintain maximum support and progress for the pupils. SJF will be using more feedback strategies in our teaching so you will see less 'deep marking' in your child's exercise books. Having trialled our strategies last half term, and the positive impact it has had in many schools across the country, we believe that our new feedback and marking system will actually enhance student progress. Parents will be able to discuss this and feedback at the various parents evenings during the year.

Sean Hayes

**Academic Tutoring
Year 12 & 13
10 September to
21 September**

Year 10 Information Evening

This takes place on Tuesday 18 September from 7pm-8pm in the main hall. This is an ideal opportunity to come along and hear about how you can support your child as they embark on their GCSE courses. The evening is designed to inform you about how GCSEs have recently been reformed, as well as giving you the opportunity to hear from English, Mathematics and Science about subject requirements and course structure. Ms Wilson will be presenting about work experience and the opportunities open to you. This will be an excellent evening to introduce you to Year 10 and enable you to ask any questions you may have. I look forward to seeing you there.

Mr Double



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Term Dates

As promised last week, the main dates to note for the year are:



Autumn Term 2018

22 – 26 October Half Term Holiday
Wed 19 December Term Ends

Spring Term 2019

Thu 3 January Term Begins
18 – 22 February Half Term Holiday
25 February Training day
5 April Term Ends

Summer Term

Tue 23 April Term Begins
Mon 6 May Bank Holiday – school closed
27 May to 31 May Half Term Holiday
Fri 19 July Term Ends

Parents Evenings

Tue 18 September Year 10 Information Evening
Tue 30 October Year 7 Tutor Evening
Tue 6 November Years 10 & 11
Tue 8 January Years 11, 12 & 13
Tue 29 January Year 9 (with Options Evening)
Tue 26 March Years 8 & 13
Tue 11 June Years 7, 10 & 12.
Please note dates and further information will follow.

Other Events

Tue 2 October Open Evening (for Year 6)
Fri 5 October Cambridge House Mass
Tue 16 October Sixth Form Open Evening
Thu 1 November Mass for Feast of All Saints
Tue 6 November Remembrance Mass
Thu 29 November Rochester House Mass
Mon 10 December Advent Reconciliation Services
Thu 13 December Carol Service
Wed 30 January Beverley House Mass
Tue 19 March Lent Reconciliation Services
Wed 3 April 60th Anniversary Mass
Tue 7 May Westminster House Mass
20 – 24 May Year 10 Work Experience
Tue 25 June Celebration of Achievement
Thu 18 July Sports Day
Fri 19 July St John Fisher Day

Year of Reading

This year will be our school's 'Year of Reading'. We want to inspire a love of reading in students that will stay with them throughout their lives. In addition, numerous research studies indicate that improved reading fluency supports higher achievement in exams and greater academic progress.

There are going to be a number of initiatives this year, and in assembly this week Miss Stewart has been explaining the Reading Passports to students. All students will be issued with a reading passport in which to log books they have read. Once they have written a brief review their passport will be signed by their tutor. The more books students read the more rewards they will achieve, including being awarded House points. We want every student to at least achieve a Bronze award this year.

In addition there will be more shared reading in form time and a greater focus on literacy related activities, including inter-house Spelling Bees and developing a school newspaper. Parents are asked to support by encouraging reading at home and helping their child to find books that appeal to them. Our school Study Centre has many books available to borrow and, if you haven't done so already, please join your local library.

Encouraging a Study Culture

All students have a homework timetable and should be starting to get back into the routine of learning at home. One of the most helpful things a parent can do for their child is to encourage a study culture at home. Here are some tips as to things you might consider:

- Ensure that homework is prioritised in family routines #
- Have a place where your child can study quietly and have sufficient space to do their work and have their books around them.#
- Check and sign the homework diary#
- Make sure your child has their Doodle log-in if they have access to IT at home.#
- Check when your child has assessments and ensure that they have scheduled some revision time and know what to revise.#
- If your child struggles to complete homework at home, encourage them to use homework club at lunchtimes in school, or stay in the Study Centre after school to complete work. #
- Check that your child is using home study time constructively and not being distracted by their mobile phone, tablet, X-box etc.#
- Discuss their work and show interest in what they are studying#
- Offer incentives for successfully completing homework over a period of time#



'A year of reading ... a lifetime of memories.'