

12 July 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

As I reflect on the successes of The Castle School's 50th year, I do so with enormous pride. As Headteacher, I want everyone to achieve their personal best, whatever their individual talents and aspirations. At our Achievement Evening on 7 July, we celebrated the success and contributions of our students in an array of categories. I look forward to sharing the success of the examination results in the summer, with the students who have worked tremendously hard.

Over the past few weeks, I have been fortunate to experience our community coming together in a variety of activities, most notably the Cabaret and Arts evenings. It is these types of activities that provide enrichment and the whole education that is a significant feature of our thriving and inclusive school. I would like to thank the students for their effort and positive involvement, staff and governors for their commitment, and you as parents for your on-going support of the school.

Please find below details about the arrangements for the end of this term and the start of the new school year.

Last Day of Term:

A reminder that term will end for students at **12.25 pm on Friday 22 July**. Lunch will not be served on that day. The school buses will be here by 12.25 pm and will plan to depart by 12.40 pm. If you wish your child to remain in school until the regular end time of 3.25 pm, please contact Mr Welsh, Senior Teacher, and he will arrange for their supervision.

Publication of Exam Results:

GCSE and A Level results will be available on the following dates this summer:

- **Thursday 18 August 2016 (A/AS)**
- **Thursday 25 August 2015 (GCSE)**

Full details of the timings for these days have been sent to all Year 10 – 13 students and are also available on the website.

If a student is not able to attend at this time, but would like the results posted, then a stamped, addressed envelope needs to be left with the Exams Office before the end of term. Exam results cannot be issued over the phone or by email; if a student would like someone else (e.g. a family member or friend) to collect their results, they should provide a letter of authorisation to the Exams Office.

Good luck to all those awaiting to hear what we hope will be good news to reward the hard work put in this year.

Making a Good Start to the New Term:

Term starts for **Years 7, 12 and 13** on **Friday 2 September 2016**.

Term starts for **Years 8, 9, 10 and 11** on **Monday 5 September 2016**.

After a staff Inset on Thursday 1 September, term begins on **Friday 2 September** for students in **Years 7, 12 and 13**. This arrangement is to enable our new Year 7 students to make a confident, well-prepared and focused start. For Years 12 and 13, it also allows time for analysis of GCSE and A Level results, completion of enrolment on new courses and efficient preparation for a successful year of study.

Students in Years 8 - 11 will start the new term on **Monday 5 September**. Students should be on site by 8.35 am ready for registration at 8.40am and will begin with a tutor period before full lessons commence Period 2.

Students entering Year 12 are reminded that Sixth Form Enrolment Day will be held on **Friday 2 September**. Year 12 students will not be in school on Monday 5 September so that we can process their enrolment documents and prepare timetables. Teaching will begin on **Tuesday 6 September** and students should be on site by 8.35 am ready for registration at 8.40 am.

Year 13 students should come into school on **Friday 2 September** for 9.30am. There will be an assembly in the hall followed by an enrolment session with their Tutor, followed by any necessary discussions to agree their individual curriculum. There will be no teaching on Monday 5 and Tuesday 6 September, although some students will be asked to come in for individual interviews before their timetable can be finalised. Teaching will begin for Year 13 students on **Wednesday 7 September**.

Uniform:

The vast majority of our students wear impeccable uniform. Occasionally, a very small number of students do not meet our high standards. I would like to take this opportunity, therefore, to reinforce our uniform regulations. I hope that this gives you plenty of notice, should you need to purchase new items of uniform. For your information and attention please find attached a copy of our dress code. In brief, the uniform consists of:

- Sweatshirt with The Castle School crest
- Light blue polo shirt with The Castle School crest (white for Years 10 and 11 only)
- Plain dark shoes with low heels (mule style, ballet pump style or canvas plimsoll type shoes are not acceptable and must not be worn).
- Plain black skirt or tailored trousers for girls. (Black jeans or leggings are not permitted).
- Black tailored trousers for boys. (Black jeans are not permitted).

Students are not to wear trainers when in uniform. This includes during the journeys between home and school. Trainers may only be worn during PE lessons.

School sweatshirts must be worn and any garment worn under the polo shirt must not be visible. I would particularly draw attention to the fact that cardigans, hoodies (other than Castle School hoodies) or any other tops/jumpers are not acceptable parts of school uniform and should not be brought to school. Jewellery must be minimal - a wristwatch and one pair of earrings (small studs or sleepers for pierced ears). Please resist letting your child have anything other than their ears pierced, as facial piercings will have to be removed. Students' hair must be of a natural looking colour with no extreme or offensive styles.

Arrangements for Lunchtime:

At The Castle School, students are expected to stay on site all lunchtime. Only in very exceptional circumstances will Years 7 to 9 students be allowed to leave the site at lunchtime or go home for lunch.

Students in Year 10 and 11 may go to their **own home** for lunch with parental permission. The right to this privilege may be withdrawn should an individual student's conduct cause concern. If you wish your child to leave the school to go **home** for lunch, please complete a Lunch Pass Application Form available from Student Services. Lunch passes will be credit card size with a photo of the student. These should be submitted to the relevant LSP. There will be regular lunch pass checks, to ensure the safety and supervision of students.

No students are allowed to leave the site at break. Students in Year 11 leaving the Park Road site for 'off-site' PE on a Tuesday afternoon should leave no earlier than 1.00 pm. Movement between sites at lunchtime (for students in Years 10 and 11) should take place no earlier than 1.15 pm.

Punctuality:

Students should be aware of the following timings regarding the start of the school day:

- 8.35 am - tutors open tutor bases. Students should be on site no later than 8.40 am.
- Registration officially opens at 8.40 am.
- If a student arrives late for registration they must go to their tutor base and will receive a late mark.
- If a student arrives very late, i.e. after 9.00 am, they must report to student services and register with the Attendance Officer.

Absence:

Research shows that high levels of attendance and good academic performance are strongly linked. Our expectation is that all students will have an attendance in excess of 95%. If your child is absent, please telephone 01454 862518 to provide details of the reason. The school operates an automated 'Truancy Call' system to monitor and chase unauthorised absences. If your child is absent and we have received no notification as to the reason, the system calls your home during the morning. Please discuss any questions regarding absence with Mrs Culpin, Attendance Officer, on 01454 862518.

Please can I remind parents and carers that leave of absence will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Details relating to requests for absence can be found in the parent section of the school's website.

Term Dates:

An initial list of key dates for your diary is attached (Terms 1, 2 and 3).

Farewell and Thank You

As we come to the end of the school year we inevitably say goodbye to a number of members of staff:

Five members of staff are retiring after considerable service:

Chris Phillips, Head of our Design Technology Faculty, and lead teacher for Food. Chris has worked at the school for over 30 years.

Ann Bradley has worked at the school since 1998. Ann was most recently a Leader of Student Progress, and has also been a Second in the Maths Faculty.

Olivia Green who has worked as an LSA for 23 years and Jean Churchill, also an LSA since 2001. Olivia and Jean have worked closely with our students providing much support and guidance.

Steve Edwards joined us in 2011, as Head of Physics. Steve had previously worked closely with the school over a number of years as a Science Adviser for South Gloucestershire Council. This year, he has been deployed at Marlwood School, helping with teaching and the on-going development of their Science Faculty.

We wish all five colleagues a very happy and well-earned retirement.

Other staff are moving on to exciting new opportunities in other schools. Ceri Ward, currently Second in our English Faculty, has been appointed to be the new Head of English at Abbeywood School in Filton. She has played a very big role in our excellent GCSE English results in recent years, and Abbeywood will be very lucky to have her.

Selena Jones has been appointed as Head of French at Katharine Lady Berkeley School, while Jenny Rowe has been appointed to a job in the Languages Faculty at Malmesbury School. Selena and Jenny have both played very large roles in our own Modern Foreign Languages Faculty in recent years, including overseas visits, and their new schools are very lucky to get them.

From our Science Faculty we are sorry to have to say goodbye to Colin Seeney, Rebecca Smith and Charlotte Weaver – all of whom are relocating to schools nearer their homes.

In Maths we also say goodbye to Gill Glover, who is moving to Maidenhill School in Gloucestershire, and Rosie Evans who is leaving us to do some overseas travelling.

Within our Learning Support Team we also say goodbye to Tina Winkworth, Emma Dutfield and Tracey Stringer.

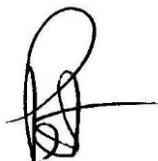
We also say a thank you to some staff who have been here this year covering colleagues during maternity or other absences – these include George Newbould (History), Elliese Evans (Geography), Corrin Martin (Dance), Jane Collins (Art), and Steph Williams (DT). We wish all of them luck in the next stages of their careers.

Thanks also to Katie Bradbury, Meg Fletcher and Mel Graham who have both stepped in to fill short term vacancies this year, and who we expect to see again as part of our team of supply teachers.

May I take this opportunity to thank them all for their contribution to Castle School.

Finally, I wish you all a restful summer break.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Smart', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Peter Smart
Headteacher