

Thank you to parents for responses to last week's newsletter. It's really important that you feel you are able to come back to us with any concerns or queries and I will always try to respond to these in a timely fashion.

It's another fairly brief update this week – please remember to send me any personal or individual messages of congratulations for the many amazing achievements that your children accomplish outside school if you want them to have a 'shout out' in the weekly letter.

Aysgarth School

On Monday I visited Aysgarth School in response to an invitation from Rob Morse, the Headteacher. He is interested in collaboration at Key Stage 3 and we had a really positive meeting discussing potential areas of mutual benefit. Clearly it is a completely different educational environment, but there is a commitment and willingness from both of us to explore opportunities that could provide our students with some great experiences. I will give further updates as plans evolve.

School Meals

Before Christmas, Annette De Roche (Catering Manager) met with students to consult with them on some new ideas for school meals. One of their suggestions was to make more of themed days as part of raising awareness of different cultures and traditions, and to give more opportunities for students to try different foods. A taster of what's to come over the next couple of weeks...

Thursday 23rd January - Pizza Day

Monday 27th January – Burns Day (Haggis Neeps and Tatties anyone?)

Tuesday 28th January – Chinese New Year

Rotary Chef Competition

The next round of the Rotary Chef Competition takes place in school next Thursday. We have representatives coming in from the Rotary Club, and will be welcoming students from Northallerton College and Queen Ethelburga's. There are 2 students competing from each school with one winner going through to the next round which is held at Betty's Cook School in Harrogate. Readers will no doubt remember Lucy Atkinson's brilliant progress in this competition last year and we hope for more of the same from our candidates this year. I'd like to thank our friends from the Rotary for giving us this opportunity and we wish the best of luck to Lucy Archer and George Bramley.

A Special 'Well Done' to...

Aaron Bell in Yr 11 who has been selected to join the England Rugby Developing Player Program (ERDPP). The ERDPP is an RFU programme that provides a structured package of quality coaching for new and existing players between the ages of 13 and 16. Congratulations and good luck to Aaron.

Yr 9 and 10 - Army Activity

Today we welcomed the Army Outreach Team into school. They worked with a group of 35 Yr 9 and Yr 10 students and started the day with a careers assembly. This was followed by a series of sessions full of challenging tasks aimed at developing mental and physical attributes. The idea is to give students a taste of Army teamwork and problem solving skills with an emphasis on working together, the importance of hard work, physical exercise and following instructions. Miss Temple has already given me some feedback on the day – the students were fantastic and two of the visitors approached her on separate occasions to say that this was the best school they had visited in terms of the engagement levels from the students. They have asked if they can come back again in the summer term to do another activity which is something we will definitely aim to book in.

Maths and Computing ‘Deep Dive’ Week

Next week it is the turn of Maths and Computing to take part in the ‘Deep Dive’ process that we have started in school year. Each faculty area will have a week where we invite an external specialist to work with our leadership team as we take a really detailed look at our curriculum in terms of what we are teaching, how we are teaching and the reasons for teaching different topics in a certain order (we have already completed the process for a number of subject areas including English, Drama, Media, PE, Art, Music). We carry out learning walks, speak with students and staff and take the opportunity to review department documentation. The two previous reviews have proved to be really useful in highlighting areas of strength and areas to develop – we think this is a crucial part of our ongoing improvement as a school.

Parent Appointments

In order to avoid frustration or disappointment, please can I ask parents to ensure that they try to confirm an appointment in advance if they need to see a member of staff, rather than just turning up in Reception. I do understand that sometimes an urgent situation might arise that makes this difficult, but the context for this request is that almost all our staff teach to their maximum allowance, leaving very little flexibility/availability to meet with a parent if it has not been booked in advance to coincide with a free slot. Even coming in before school starts is difficult, the morning is the busiest time when staff are covering registration for absent colleagues, or picking up issues with students from the day before, or supervising/delivering assemblies, so we simply cannot guarantee someone will be free, though we always try. What we will always try to do is ensure that you are contacted as soon as possible if there is an issue that you are concerned about, so that we can agree a way forward. Thank you for your patience and understanding with this.

Upcoming Events and Reminders

- Yr 9 Parent Evening: 4pm-7pm 22nd January
- Yr 11 Extra Revision sessions: Ongoing – see separate sheet
- Revision Week: Next week for all Year 7-10 students in preparation for assessment week the following week
- Year 9 Geography fieldtrip to Flamborough Head and Bridlington: 5th February