

15th December 2022

**WROTHAM SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
TERM 2**

Wrotham School
Borough Green Road
Wrotham, Sevenoaks
Kent TN15 7RD

office@wrotham.kent.sch.uk
01732 905860

Headteacher
Michael Cater

Executive Headteacher
Matthew Wright

Dear Parent/Carer

END OF TERM 2 UPDATE

As we approach the end of term 2 and start the New Year I thought I would update you on the work that has been going on at the school and wish you a great Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of the staff at the school.

It has been another busy and productive term at the school with lots of success to look back on and celebrate. I would like to congratulate our year 7's and year 12's on making a fantastic start to the new chapters in their education and commend them for making such a positive and high performing start.

I would also like to thank our parents for their continued commitment to the school and our goals. We fully value the strong community we have at the school and are acutely aware that without this support we could not continue to undertake the exciting and important work we do with our students. Events like the Christmas Bazaar, our end of year drama shows and parent evenings remind us of just how great this partnership is. It has been great to welcome back our community to our school in person and I have enjoyed speaking to parents again face to face at our sports events and celebrations, long may this continue.

We know that whilst many elements of our lives have returned to normal, there are many challenges we still face. As well as our focus on positive news stories I have also addressed our work to support families during the current cost of living crisis as well as some of the issues our young people are facing. We are always here to work in partnership with our community to support wherever we can. If there is any issues you and your family are facing in the coming year please do not hesitate to contact us to support, we are always willing to help in any way we can.

**HIGH EXPECTATIONS
CHALLENGE
OPPORTUNITY**

wrothamschool.com

 **Character
Education
Trust**

Company number: 07662701.
A company limited by guarantee and
registered in England & Wales. Registered
office: Wrotham School, Borough Green
Road, Wrotham, Sevenoaks TN15 7RD

SCHOOL PRODUCTION – CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

I hope that as many of you as possible got to see our seasonal production this year, the first in our new, refurbished theatre space. Featuring our youngest cast ever, parents, families, staff and students were treated to a wonderful performance of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, rearranged and adapted in his usual style by Mr Truss. Not only were we given outstanding performances from the cast but this was complimented and enhanced by some amazing performances from our musicians in the school band. Thank you to all of the students, staff and guests that worked hard both on and off stage to bring this performance together despite the day of practice and run through missed on the Monday due to the adverse weather. A remarkable achievement and an entertaining and fun evening that was enjoyed by all.

CHRISTMAS DINNER



As is tradition in the last week before Christmas, on Thursday our students enjoyed their Christmas dinner. Students were served a traditional Christmas meal with crackers and party hats. Thank you to our amazing canteen staff who managed to produce a great value and tasty meal for all that attended. A lovely way to celebrate both the time of year and the end of term.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR



Our Christmas Bazaar was a fantastic and well attended event to see us into Christmas – we raised a total of £1465 towards our Young Carers projects. We had lots of visitors and our school bands were on top form.

LIBF



On Wednesday 23rd November, a small group of Sixth form Finance students went to tour the LIBF University. They also participated in a walking tour of the City of London, where the students were given the history of the banking in the UK and shown where all the major financial institutions are located. This was a great opportunity for our students. The LIBF University is the leading university for Banking and Finance employability, being ranked 13th out of 312 degree-awarding institutions across all subjects.

YOUNG REPORTERS – SCHOOL ONLINE NEWSPAPER

We are proud to share the following link to our dedicated online school newspaper “The Wrotham Reporter”.

All content is created and published by our students at the school and there are already a range of brilliant articles to read through on a variety of topics and subjects. We hope you enjoy reading [THE WROTHAM REPORTER](#)

INVESTIN – YOUNG INVESTMENT BANKERS

Oliver P in Year 12 attended the InvestIn Young Investment Bankers day at UCL on Sunday 20th November and had an amazing day!

Not only did he get a lot of information about further study and the different careers in that sector, but he also won the trading deal exercise. He came first out of 350 other students, despite being one of the youngest participants!

When they asked him how he’d got his results, he told them, ‘I understand supply and demand – it was about oil. I just maxed out and winged it!’ He now has to complete an online assessment to consolidate his learning – if he passes that test, he will get a certificate from UCL and InvestIn to add to his CV and future university or apprenticeship applications. Well done, Ollie!

YOUNG CARERS

Year 7 Young Carers had a lovely afternoon at ‘A Touch of Clay’ on Friday 2nd December. They all decorated a piece of pottery each for themselves or their families. A great time was had by all. You can see the excellent quality of their work below.



CAREERS

We have a new and updated Careers Website that can be found here:

<https://www.wrothamschool.com/careers/careers-at-wrotham-school/>

This is a much improved version of our dedicated careers page and contains all of the information you need to support your child in their future careers choices. It also gives updates on the work the school is doing with all year groups and plan for their time at the school to receive the very best in careers support and education.



CIVIL SERVICE - CAREERS COMPETITION

Congratulations to Year 10 for taking part in our Civil Service Careers competition this term. As part of the challenge, they had to work within a team and show creativity in proposing ideas of how the different departments in the civil service could work to solve problems within a fictional town. They also had to allocate the funding that would be appropriate for each of their suggestions. Each progress group then held a vote where every team had to discuss and present their ideas and, as a class, they decided which group's proposals would be the most effective.

The proposals were sent to the Civil Service and a panel of 10 judges within the Department for Work and Pensions chose their favourite two groups out of the four that were submitted. Mr Allum and Miss Fuller's group entries will be completed next term. Unfortunately, the judges weren't able to make it to assembly as planned but they were very complimentary of the quality of all of the entries that they saw and are looking forward to working with us later in the year.

Mr Azim's nominated group won! They were each awarded a £10 Amazon voucher by Wrotham Careers Department. What was also fantastic was that one other entry was deemed so good by the judges, that they insisted that a second special award be created. Mrs Jacques's nominated group has been given a week's worth of 'skip the lunch queue' passes as a result.

The winning team included:

- Liam, Jack G, Jack M, Jacob N, Jack S

The special award went to:

- Annabel, Chloe, Bella

The level of engagement from the whole year group showed how developed their skills in teamwork, creativity and communication are. Mrs Hollinshead has also set some research tasks on SMHW if anyone is interested in a career within the civil service either after sixth form/college or after university, as an apprentice or as part of their graduate programmes and civil service fast track. For more information about apprenticeships, please visit the careers pages of the Wrotham School website.

BULLYING UPDATE

Since I last wrote to you regarding bullying we have seen a good level of success with many cases of alleged bullying through the use of our high profile reporting email and our new and clear “line in the sand” bullying policy. This has started to reduce the number of instances we are seeing across the school and we continue to work on this and raise awareness of bullying, how to report bullying and how we can manage these often complex situations. It continues to mostly effect girls, often in year 8, 9 and 10 and 95% of the cases we currently deal with involve multiple students on social media outside of school. I refer to my concerns regarding the impact of social media elsewhere in this newsletter.

However, there is no magic wand to wave and solve this issue, we are very aware that some of these issues continue to cause upset, anxiety and anger in those who experience this.

We will continue to make this our priority.

More information on bullying and how to report it can be found here:

<https://www.wrothamschool.com/report-bullying-2/>

VAPING / E- CIGARETTES

As you will probably have seen when out and about there is currently a significant increase in the amount of young people vaping. Thankfully, we barely ever see or hear of cigarette use in or around school these days, but this is now creeping back via an increase in student’s vaping.

The low cost of single use vapes makes these very accessible to children and unsurprisingly they have very quickly made their way into the hands of our students. Social media has also had a big influence on this.

We have had to make a significant number of exclusions recently where students have been caught vaping in our toilets or on the buses/outside the school gates.

Some key facts:

- Most vapes contain nicotine, which we all know is addictive.
- Nicotine products are illegal to sell or supply to anyone under the age of 18.

- E cigarettes are only recommended for use by existing smokers.
- Vaping is harder to catch/spot than smoking as it often smells less and is easier to conceal.
- This is happening at all schools and in wider society, not just Wrotham.
- We are aware of shops breaking the law and selling vapes to younger customers without challenge.

The same school rules apply to vaping as smoking – a 1 day internal or external suspension for use of or possession in school/on the journey to and from school. This escalates for repeated offences. Please can you discuss vaping with your child, remind them that it is prohibited and make them aware of the consequences both in terms of the law, school rules and their health.

Again, a culture of openness, honesty and clear boundaries with students is important.

OPEN EVENTS

Thank you to all of our staff and students who were involved in our open events for prospective students. During term one we were visited by over 2000 families and the school remains as popular as ever. We were able to treat our visitors to tours of the school, music performances and close up experiences of our sport and drama extra-curricular work.

We know this is an anxious and nail-biting time for parents making their choice of schools and hope we have gone some way to giving families the information they need to make the best choice for their child.

SPORTS NEWS



Team Debut

One of our very own have made their first team debut. Ella H in Year 13, made her first team debut for Tottenham Hotspurs in the Barclays Women's Super League. Tottenham went on to beat Coventry United 5-1, giving them 3 points in the Conti Cup. She even took some time to sign autographs for some of her young fans. What an incredible achievement and we can only imagine the great success Ella will achieve in her very bright future at the club.

Extra-Curricular Lunch Time Clubs

Students have picked up where they left off last year and have thrown themselves into our wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs. This term we have offered 7 football clubs, 3 basketball clubs, a badminton club and a running club. A large number of our students show incredible motivation and attend 3 or 4 clubs every single week!

Restart a Heart Day

On the 17th October we helped to raise awareness for the British Heart Foundation's Restart a Heart Day. Using our specialist CPR training dummies, the PE team delivered a bespoke session to all students in Year 7. As a result of the open-mindedness shown by our students, they have now learnt a vital skill which could potentially save a life!

UCFB Sport Visitor – Jason Thomas

Jason came into school on Friday 2nd December to deliver a talk to Year 9 (whole year group), Year 10 and Year 12 Sport students. Jason spoke confidently to all students about employability skills, character traits and career opportunities in Sport. Students demonstrated excellent open-mindedness and respect throughout with some asking great questions to further their knowledge and understanding. Jason spoke about his own background and how he started out in the Sport Sector which really engaged the students throughout and left students thinking about various higher education pathways in Sport. Students went away with information booklets with sport specific careers to consider and look into.



Football

Our extensive football fixture list is underway. Teams from Year 7-11 have all competed in the first round of the Maidstone Schools Football competition. There were some particularly impressive performances from our Year 7 and 8 squads who both qualified for the premiership in their respective competitions.

We also entered our Year 7, 8 and 9 squads into the Kent County Cup this year. Our Year 7 and 8 squads have both progressed into round 3 after winning their first 2 games of the competition. We look forward to seeing how they get on in the later rounds next term. The Kent County Cup is a fantastic opportunity for our students to show motivation, communication and resilience as they test themselves against the very best footballing schools in Kent.

Cup Success

On the 8th December 2022 we managed to come from behind to defeat Canterbury Academy in a cup football game 2-1. We have now progressed to the quarter finals of the Kent Cup which is a fantastic achievement in itself. This was yet another fantastic team performance from our Year 8 squad and it really is a pleasure to watch them perform. The opposition PE teacher has got in touch to praise how well our students worked as a team and communicated, testament to all of our hard work on character throughout the school. The team is as follows:

Harry S, Albert A, Ben W, Will S, Harley G, Louie S, Henry D, George H, Korban E, Ollie G, Logan J, Sam M, Blake L, Henry A, George S.

RBC Race for the Kids

On Wednesday 5th October students in Year 7 – 10 all took part In the Race for the Kids in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital. Students ran as a community throughout the day on the school field, showing amazing character in the process. This was testament to the hard work on character development which takes place throughout the school on a daily basis. After some incredible support from both parents and staff we managed to raise a fantastic total of £1,827 for Great Ormond Street.

SOCIAL MEDIA – SAFEGUARDING

I feel it is important to return to this topic. In the past, I have been very clear in my views on social media from a school perspective and in recent months these views have only been strengthened by what I am observing in young people, particularly in regard to their mental health and social development.

In my personal view, which you are welcome to discard, I feel strongly that social media poses one of the biggest threats to the wellbeing of young people that we have ever experienced. Despite the common view, it is not a necessity of modern life, no one has to use social media and there is a good chance that it has moved from being a convenience or social opportunity to being a dangerous distraction from the real world or worse, an addiction for many young people.

I have added a social media guide and safeguarding page which has more information and support for parents regarding their child's use of social media.

<https://www.wrothamschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Safeguarding-Update-parent-letter.pdf>

FREE BREAKFAST REMINDER

Just a quick reminder that we provide free breakfast cereal from our canteen each morning for anyone who wants it. It is a simple gesture but one I hope will ensure everyone has access to a free breakfast at the start of each day to be used as needed by all. We try to cater for as many tastes and preferences as possible and will have a good selection of cereal to try and meet most tastes! This has proved popular with many so far and all are welcome to use this service.

ART DEPARTMENT NEWS

On Friday 16th September UCA held an online workshop with our year 13 students from our Art, Photography, Product Design, Film/Media and IT courses. This was an insightful session as it not only gave students a glimpse in to further courses into the creative industry but what life may be like as a university student. The main focus of the session was to give students information on how to prepare a portfolio when applying for creative courses. The session included tips, advice and examples of what to include. As well as offering some freebie sketchbooks which our students always love!

"Very informative and helpful session with a well prepared presentation" Molly Year 13

"I feel more confident in being able to produce a portfolio after today's session" James Year 13

BOWLING TRIP



70 year 8 students and 5 staff from the year 8 team enjoyed an evening of bowling at Maidstone's Hollywood Bowl. The event was organised as a reward visit for students for their hard work during terms 1 & 2. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event and were a credit to the school with their conduct.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

For Wrotham School, 2022 has been another very successful DofE year. We had a record number of students participating with thirty-eight Bronze candidates passing their assessed expedition; they demonstrated great Teamwork, Communication, Resilience and Compassion over two challenging expedition events. This cohort are now finishing their Volunteering, Skill and Physical sections and we look forward to celebrating with them when they achieve their awards in January.

We are also excited to welcome our new Bronze cohort to the programme. These Year 9 students have shown Open-Mindedness and Motivation by enrolling onto the award and will begin their DofE journey in the New Year.

These new participants will be joining our current year 11 Silver cohort who, alongside their studies, are completing a physical activity, learning a new skill and are volunteering in the local community. In the New Year they will also start planning for their expedition in the Summer.

It has been a real pleasure to see how the students have gained so much from taking on the challenge of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They have developed skills and had experiences that will stay with them for a very long time.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT - THE MAC TEAM

Many of you will know that our MAC team is based in school to support students with their day to day safeguarding, wellbeing and mental health. This year they have expanded their work to meet the needs of more students through group sessions, this has allowed us to support even more young people with issues such as anxiety, self-confidence and mental health.

Student Feedback

To give you an idea of the incredible impact that the team has with our students we have collated some of their anonymised feedback below:

'Now I can think why am I feeling this way and look to change my thought. I've learnt how to do that in therapy. It's a lot more manageable and I've learnt that not every person is bad. I've learnt to like myself a lot more because of working on recognising my strengths and qualities.'

'All in all I feel a lot better in myself. My confidence has improved. I still have emotional days that I sometimes can't control but it is a lot less. I have quite a few anxiety techniques now.'

'It has helped my thoughts – I can approach things better and take time before reacting to them to think about it.'

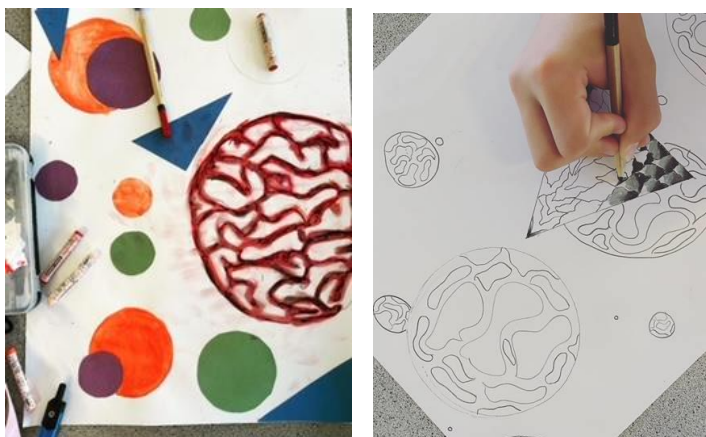
'It's helped me to identify positives in myself and make the right choices. I have more self-esteem, I'm able to talk about myself and know who I am, I couldn't do that before. I am thinking more positively.'

'Being able to explore all my different emotions and know how I'm feeling! I feel different, ever since I've been coming to therapy I've felt happier and situations are different.'

If you would like your child to get support from this team please contact your child's HOY to request support. This will be triaged according to urgency of need by the team.

ART THERAPY

The Intervention Team, in collaboration with the Art Department, trialled an art therapy group for some students in different year groups. We have delivered another two art therapy groups since September which have both been successful. Students in the groups have had the opportunity to express themselves in a creative way and practice mindfulness as a way of looking after their mental health. I have attached some photographs of the work that has been produced.



DISCO FEVER



At the end of term 1 Year 7, 8 and 9 students had their reward discos. There was a lot of fancy dress and dancing and everyone had lots of fun – music was provided by DJ Pickles and our year 8 team also raised over £150 to support the school fund with 5 students cooking over 40 homemade pizzas as part of the fund raising. Behaviour of the students at all of the events was exceptional and created a wonderful, fun opportunity for them to celebrate their success and let their hair down.

HISTORY CLUB



I am not quite sure when the 1980's became "history" but the History club felt it was long enough a go to host a quiz and competition session during their lunchtime as part of their work to enjoy, share and celebrate their love of history. Despite making any of us over 40 feel very old indeed, they put on a great interactive show that was thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended. Anyone interested in joining History Club should contact Mrs Kingston for more information.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY

Our year 11's have been creating some incredible dishes as part of their GCSE coursework. Some examples of these can be seen below. They tasted as good as they looked and showed a variety of finely honed cooking skills.



COST OF LIVING CRISIS

We are aware that all of us are feeling the pinch over this winter period due to the well-publicised cost of living crisis.

There are some ways that the school can help support families who are struggling and I have listed these below:

- If you meet the income threshold you can apply for “Free School Meals” this also opens up support during holiday periods, is managed by KCC and can be applied for here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>
- Take advantage of our free school breakfast.
- Contact us for information about our food bank/sanitary parcels or if you would like to donate – please contact sreeve@wrotham.kent.sch.uk
- Encourage your child to use our after school sports and academic clubs. These cover a wide range of activities during and after school and are free.
- School uniform can be provided by the school for those who are struggling financially – just contact your child’s HOY for more information – this includes PE kit. If you would like to donate old uniform/kit, please just drop washed items that are in good condition to reception.
- We provide sanitary products to girls at the school as required throughout the school day.
- If you need support with finances related to school trips and visits, on a case to case basis, please contact me directly on mcater@wrotham.kent.sch.uk
- If there are any other struggles you are facing financially or otherwise that are directly impacting on your child please contact our safeguarding team at safeguarding@wrotham.kent.sch.uk

COMMUNICATION OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK

The school is fully closed during the school break and staff will not be available on-site or by email/phone until we return on 3rd January 2023.

If you have a safeguarding concern for a child to report, you can use the following website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/protecting-children>

Have a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Kind regards



Mr M Cater
Headteacher