

15th December 2023

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Dear Parent/Carer

End of Term 2 - Newsletter - Christmas 2023

Best wishes to you and your family at the start of the festive season. Each term I like to share a newsletter to keep you up to date with information and news from the school.

As always, it has been a busy and productive year at Wrotham School and I have tried to capture and celebrate of all this good work below.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the staff at Wrotham School.

Follow Us on WhatsApp

Follow us on WhatsApp by following this link for live, up to date information and notices from the school.

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaEDz2a47Xe6xLoas23F>

(This will fully replace our School Facebook page from January 2024).

CANTEEN UPDATE

In Term 2 we introduced big changes to our canteen and food provision at the school.

I am sure your child will confirm and agree that the menu range and quality of food provided has improved significantly over the last few weeks and students are enjoying a fantastic provision of home cooked food and snacks. The new canteen leadership team has reviewed our food offer and will continue to listen to students to make any ongoing improvements.

I receive many anecdotal reports from other schools that school food has become increasingly bland and overpriced in recent years. At Wrotham School we employ our own independent team that ensures that the food is always prepared and cooked "in house" and is fresh and tasty. We don't have to cut the corners required by profit making external providers and this means our food retains the quality, quantity and variation you would want for your child.

**HIGH EXPECTATIONS
CHALLENGE
OPPORTUNITY**

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Running a school canteen is not without challenge; we feed over 950 students twice per day and can normally serve over 600 hungry students in 15 minutes during a busy lower school lunch period. This efficiency ensures that students get fed and still have ample time to eat, play and socialise.

From January 2024 there will be a small increase in the cost of food. We have not increased prices for over 5 years but costs from suppliers have risen with steep inflation and we have to reflect these changes.

We have ensured that healthy foods and drinks are protected from these increases and that any other uplift is minimal. Most children, who have a main meal, snack and drink will only see an overall increase of between 30p and 50p in total. This will not impact students who receive free school meals. We feel this is reasonable and fair and will ensure we can continue to provide generous portions of good quality food.

Please also remember that we continue to provide **free** breakfast cereal in the mornings for any students who wants to grab breakfast when they arrive.

UNIFORM

Thank you for your support with uniform this year. Visitors to the school always pass comment on how smart our students look; big improvements have also been seen in PE with more students bringing correct kit to lessons. As uniform wears and tears over the course of a term at school, it is important that, if needed, any broken or worn items are replaced over the break for a fresh start in January. We will be checking uniform with the students in the first week back.

If your child has any false nails or similar put on over the festive period, please can you make sure these, along with any other items such as false eyelashes, rings, jewellery, face tattoos (☺) etc, are removed before we return.

Trainers have also become an increasing issue. We are very clear on this, we do not permit trainers of any colour in school. Please do not listen to shoe shops who tell you that their trainers are suitable for school, they rarely are. If you are unsure please ask us before buying them so we can save time and money in letting you know if they are suitable or not. School shoes are what everyone knows to be smart leather shoes, without labels and are not made by Nike, Reebok or Addidas! For example – Air Force One Nike trainers are not school shoes and at £100 a pair, they never have been.

Getting uniform right makes the start to the new term run that much more smoothly without time wasted on discussion about uniform.

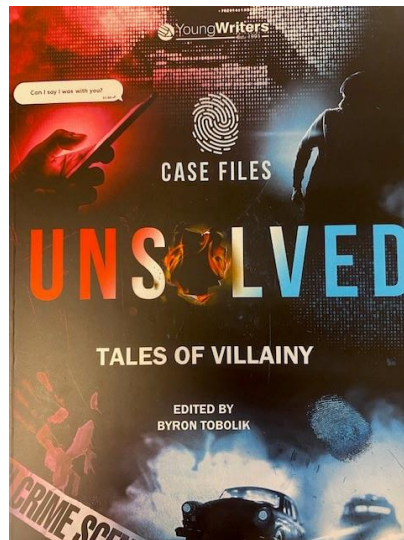
Our uniform policy can be found here:

<https://www.wrothamschool.com/wp-content/uploads/Wrotham-School-uniform-policy-september-2021.pdf>

YOUNG WRITERS

In term one, Wrotham School entered a national competition from the Young Writers association, and we were inundated with some really gripping and engaging 100 word stories based on the crime genre. A fantastic total of 47 of our students have made it into the final book, which has recently been published – copies of this will even be in the British Library archives! We are truly so proud of everyone who entered the competition and those who have been published.

Look out for details of our next competition, entitled 'The Glitch' coming soon.



ART THERAPY

As you may know our school psychotherapist and Art Department lead run an Art Therapy intervention for students to support their good mental health and wellbeing through art and creative expression.

Below are examples of Year 7 Transition Collages symbolising emotions and grounding doodles. Year 7's selected shapes to represent different emotions. Shapes and colour washes were used to devise an abstract composition that maps out their transition from primary to secondary school. Students were asked to represent the feelings and emotions they felt before starting Wrotham School. As the shapes travel across the paper, they transform into new shapes to symbolise how they are feeling now.



FIRST AID TRAINING

In October, groups of Year 7, 8, 9 and 12 students spent the morning learning first aid and CPR from trained paramedics. This was an incredible experience for these students equipping them with life-saving skills, fostering empathy, responsibility and leadership. It nurtures character development by instilling a sense of compassion and preparedness. Our students were incredible ambassadors for the school and showed outstanding character in their approach to such a serious topic.

MATHS CHALLENGE

On 21st November, four year 11 students took part in a mathematics challenge at Invicta Grammar School, in Maidstone, against other local schools including local grammar schools. The competition consisted of paired and group activities where they had to think critically and problem solve. Our students displayed excellent character by showing respect to the other competitors, resilience in their effort to answer all questions and integrity by representing the school with pride. As well as having fun, the students did themselves proud by placing 4th.

Congratulations to Elliot, Tommy, James and Michael.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR



In early December, we held our annual Christmas Bazaar run by Mrs Young, Mrs Healy and the team of volunteer parents and students. The event was very well attended with festive stalls; a raffle; music performances and refreshments. The event raised over £1400 for a range of charities. Thank you to all who attended and gave their time.

A TOUCH OF CLAY – YOUNG CARERS



In November our Young Carer students visited a “Touch of Clay” to take part in a pottery painting class. They spent the day preparing and painting unique pieces of pottery which were then fired and given to the students. Not only were the students and staff thrilled with the experience, we also received a very complimentary email from a customer at the shop who wanted to let us know just how impressed she was with our students conduct, behaviour and manners.

COMMUNITY WORK

Each year Mrs Young and our students collect and prepare gifts for a local Women’s Refuge. These gifts are presented to the charity for women and children using their facilities who may not be able to receive or give gifts this Christmas.



CHARITY FUNDRAISING EVENT

Our very own Mrs Abbott will be taking part in her very first Marathon this year, and has chosen a fairly easy one... the London Marathon! She will be running this marathon on behalf of Banardo’s and if you are able to support her in this, please follow the link below.

<https://2024tclondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/laura-abbott>

RE – MEDITATION



In RE this term our year 9 classes took part in some experiential learning. Students were asked to participate in a meditation and mindfulness lesson which aimed to give them an insight into a key Buddhist practice. The students had a very enjoyable lesson and learnt how to eat an apple mindfully as well as learning about the benefits of meditation and stilling exercises. The students were excellent and showed great character strengths of open-mindedness and resilience to keep still and quiet for so long.

SCHOOL SHOW: PAN



If you were lucky enough to get tickets for our annual school show, I am sure you will agree that this year's production was our best yet. On Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th December we were treated to 3 performances of "PAN", written and adapted by Mr Truss and based on the Peter Pan stories. The cast, crew and musical team were flawless in their delivery and performances.

This year the production was “west end” standard with full lighting and professional sound production. The presentation of the emotive story was so compelling that it left many parents in tears.

With almost 50 students as part of the cast and crew it has taken months of rehearsals to tweak and refine such a smooth performance and I never fail to be amazed by the hard work and resilience of our students who range from year 7 all the way up to year 13.

A huge well done to the cast and student performers and a big thanks and congratulations to the staff team who make this happen.

We are very proud of you all.

We received some incredible feedback from parents, excerpts from which I have shared below:

“We went to see the school production of Pan this evening and were totally blown away. It was an amazing, emotional, professional, and so much more performance. The drama department has really set the bar high for next year’s production”.

“Wow! It was like a west end performance... I have no idea where you start with next year’s effort if you are planning to top this year”!

STUDENT VOICE – SURVEY

Student voice and views is a vital part of the work we do at Wrotham School. Each term we measure student’s satisfaction with the school’s work covering a range of our key objectives. We are pleased to say that in term 2 the response was very positive. The outcomes have also identified a number of areas in which we can continue to improve and we have been making these a focus of our work this term.

Questions	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Do you enjoy school?	85%	15%
Do you enjoy lessons and learning at school?	87%	13%
Teachers help me to do my best?	87%	13%
Is there an adult in school you can speak to if you are worried?	76%	24%
Is behaviour good in lessons?	86%	14%
Is bullying a problem? Is it managed well when it happens	74%	26%
Do you feel safe in school?	85%	15%
Do you take part in extra-curricular activities?	49%	51%
Are you encouraged to respect others/ treat each other equally?	95%	5%
Would you recommend the school to another pupil?	86%	14%

STUDENT VOICE – THE LOOP



In term 3 we will be setting up and hosting a range of student voices groups who will meet with myself and the school leadership team to share their views and be part of co-constructing our work moving forward. Our aim is to involve as many students, on as wider range of topics, as possible. This will start in term 3 where students will start to discuss their views and ideas on the following:

- Character and Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Bullying
- Teaching and Curriculum
- Extra-curricular experiences and learning

Topics that will be discussed over the course of the year:

- Trips and Visits
- Staying safe in school
- Staying safe outside of school
- Bullying
- Green and environmental objectives – in and outside of school
- Creating a culture of tolerance –misogynist, homophobic, transphobic and racist language and behaviour in school
- Rewards and sanctions for good and poor behaviour
- Progress Time and life and society curriculum – what should be taught?
- Guest speakers, information and events
- Extra-Curricular activities and clubs
- Structure of the school day
- Canteen menu

THORPE PARK – FRIGHT NIGHT TRIP

On Friday 13th October our Year 10 and 11 students took part in our annual Thorpe Park reward trip. This has become a fantastic tradition at Wrotham School as students strengthen friendships, build resilience and grow in a multitude of ways. This trip builds upon the character values we teach in school and allows our students to realise these in the real world. We also offer “fast passes” for those who have shown good character and attendance throughout the year. A great time was had by all.

WINTER WONDERLAND TRIP

Earlier in December, our 6th form were taken to Winter Wonderland at Hyde Park. It features several festive markets, over 100 rides and attractions from across Europe. Students took part in ice skating, rides and visited the market stalls that were there. Students had a great day and enjoyed doing something cultural ahead of the upcoming Christmas festivities. All of this work and “trips for pleasure” are part of our post pandemic work to improve student experience and socialisation.



YEAR 7-9 ENRICHMENT

This past week our Year 7 and 9 students completed their final lessons as part of their enrichment rotation. Students have worked exceptionally hard and demonstrated exceptional character throughout. Some highlights from this include; the HAKA performance, a walk through our local area, a spirited debate and a community litter pick.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

The Duke of Edinburgh Award program cultivates character development in students through its emphasis on resilience, leadership, and personal growth. Our students tackled challenges, developed problem-solving skills, and engaged in community service as part of the requirements for their Bronze certificate. We are so proud of the work they have put into this! New sign up's are currently taking place with over 200 students attending Mr Pickles information session and subsequently expressing an interest in signing up for the New Year.

CHARITY RUN

On Wednesday 11th October our school community once again came together to raise funds for the Great Ormond Hospital by taking part in the RBC Race for the Kids 2023. This was a brilliant opportunity for our students to develop their motivation, resilience and open-mindedness.

Students took part in a sponsored run of up to 5K on our back field with each year group participating and competing throughout the day.

The current total is £2,281 and still rising.

We had some stand out performers: Year 7 – Tony, Year 8 – Brodie and Ety, Year 9 – Korban, Mali, Ollie and Frankie, Year 10 – Nancy and Roxy, Bodie and Declan.

A BIG CONGRATULATIONS to all that took part!

CHRISTMAS DINNER 2023



Finally, on Thursday 14th December we welcomed over 500 students to join our annual Christmas Dinner celebrations in our main hall. As is tradition at Wrotham School staff served our students their Christmas dinners with all the trimmings. This is such a lovely way to end the term with students enjoying festive music, pulling crackers and enjoying time to sit down and eat with their friends.

Have a restful festive period and a happy new year. We look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Kind regards

Mr M Cater
Headteacher