

7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Secondary Week Ending 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Community,

What a great week this week has been! We enjoyed raising awareness of Dyslexia on Monday, where students and staff wore a red accessory to show their support. We also launched our instrumental and singing lessons during Musical Monday, and on Tuesday celebrated our wonderful teachers on World Teacher's Day. There has been a great buzz around the school since welcoming back all of our students, and it is great to see the environment coming to life with activities students are embracing.

### Preparing students

A key focus this year is to ensure students are well-prepared, both for the next steps in their learning, and for when they leave us and go on to university and into the world of work. Students have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills and gain accreditations to ensure they are best placed to apply for the top universities and the best jobs! Some of these include:

- Student Leadership positions
- Active Leaders lessons where students in Years 7 and 8 have the opportunity to gain the Sports Leaders Award
- Enrichment lessons in Year 9 where students understand their personal strengths and weaknesses and possible career path options
- Enrichment lessons for Year 11 where the focus is on subject selection for A-level/BTEC and understanding the requirements for their targeted university choices. Students work alongside current 6<sup>th</sup> Formers to develop a deeper understanding of the requirements of each A-level/BTEC course.
- Skills in School lessons give students the opportunity to gain life-skills qualifications in areas such as food hygiene and first aid
- Work experience weeks for Year 12 allow them to experience real-world learning
- The Duke of Edinburgh award for Year 12 students

I really am looking forward to sharing the progress of these, along with the success our students will come to achieve.

### Student voice

Our 'Meet the Leader' sessions took place for Year 9 students last week and Year 8 the week before. They met with Ms. East, our Deputy Headteacher, and Mr. Conlon, our Assistant Headteacher. The students discussed how much they were enjoying Masterclasses, how well their teachers are communicating with them, and that they have noticed we are encouraging students to be world class leaders. They were also impressed with their peers' attitudes to school. In terms of the areas we can work on, Year 8 students suggested that they want to be a little more active in lessons, and they would also like to see more sports-based Masterclasses next term. Year 9s would like more opportunities to visit the school farm, and would like to use the canteen more effectively. We are really enjoying meeting with the students and hearing their ideas to further improve our school.

### School finish times after half-term

There will be a change to the finish time for some students:

- All students who get the school bus will leave school at 2:55 (buses leave site at 3:05)
- Students who collect a sibling from Primary will leave school at 2:55 to collect sibling(s)
- Prep school students (who do not get the bus and do not collect a sibling) will leave at 3:05
- Senior school students (who do not get the bus and do not collect a sibling) will leave at 3:05

It is important that we maximise the learning students for as many students as possible, and therefore would like to keep Prep school students who do not need to leave to get the bus/a sibling in class for as long as possible.

## Outdoor break and lunch!

We are excited to announce that after the half-term break, students will be able to have their break and lunchtimes outside again. This will be really welcomed by students, who will be able to burn off some steam in the cooler weather that we should experience by then. There will be some rules around outdoor play to ensure we are Covid-safe, but nonetheless, this is a step in the right direction.

## Masterclass

As you will be aware, Masterclasses have been reintroduced this term with a wide variety of opportunities being offered to our students based on your feedback last year. Students have been able to take part in activities in school such as performing arts, Bollywood dance, badminton, and golf. In our efforts to continually evaluate the enriched curriculum on offer to our students, we would appreciate it if you could complete this [short survey to share your feedback](#). We look forward to sharing further information about new Masterclasses on offer next half term.

## Upcoming Key Dates

<b>Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October</b>	World Mental Health Day (will be an assembly focus next week)
<b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Year 7 parent-teacher engagement evening (online)
<b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Pink Day!</b> Students to wear as much pink as possible to raise awareness for breast cancer
<b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October</b>	½ day for students (staff training). Students leave school at 12:30pm
<b>Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October</b>	Half-term break
<b>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October</b>	School photos – details to follow
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Student leadership inauguration ceremony – details to follow

As always, I welcome your feedback - about this letter, or any aspect of your child's experience with us: [d.aschettino\\_mts@gemsedu.com](mailto:d.aschettino_mts@gemsedu.com)

I wish you a wonderful weekend!

Kind regards,

**Daniella Aschettino**  
Secondary Headteacher

