



20th December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

This has certainly been another very busy term at Homewood with an assortment of different events and activities taking place at every level throughout the school. These include many trips and visits, such as the Sixth Form trip to the Houses of Parliament, the STEM trip to Disneyland Paris, Take Up the Challenge activities at Bewl Water and Escape Kent in Canterbury, and the Year 11 English trip to see 'Blood Brothers' at the White Rock Theatre in Hastings. In school, there are just too many activities to mention, but I will outline just a few to give you a flavour of what's been happening.

The Remembrance Service in November was a very moving occasion and was made even more poignant by bringing together all of the schools in the Tenterden Schools Trust as well as many different representatives from the local community. Thank you to Miss Snow in particular for her hard work organising the service, despite the wet weather! November saw Mr Franczak's production of 'Shakespeare's Witnesses' starring students from the Sinden Youth and Sinden Stars. This clever and original production was written and directed by Mr Franczak and included some very sophisticated and engaging individual and ensemble performances.

The school's Dance students have also been incredibly busy with their involvement in two very successful events. The first was 'Dance Dash' – an energetic performance through the local streets which raised £3,500 for Children in Need – an amazing achievement! The Dance students performed more recently in the school's Annual Dance Show – an incredible evening of entertainment which included a range of different routines and a total number of 107 students! The energy and skill of all of those involved was just remarkable! Thank you to Mrs Francis and Ms Harris for their hard work and great skill with both the teaching and choreography.

I would like to thank all members of the teaching and associate staff for their hard work and support during this second term. Following the Ofsted inspection in September, we have all been busy reflecting on and reviewing our future plans for improvement. This has included much discussion about our school curriculum and our approaches to teaching and learning. School leaders have in particular been looking at ways to further enhance the quality of education throughout the school, and I thank them for their hard work and ideas and for their speedy implementation of some new ways of working.

To improve communication with parents, we are now migrating fully to the use of the SIMS Parent App – an online tool for sharing up-to-date information such as attendance, timetable, assessment, and participation in extra-curricular activities instantly and securely between school and parents. If you are still not registered to use this new system, it is imperative that you do so before the start of the new term. Please refer to Mrs Douglas' letter which was sent home last week. Thank you for your support with this matter.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the huge amount of work and support provided by the College office teams. I have been overwhelmed by the hard work and dedication of these colleagues who provide daily frontline care and support to the many students within their charge. In short, the school would just not operate without them. Moreover, as I am sure you can imagine, they are often required to manage some challenging situations, but they all do so with efficiency and the utmost care and professionalism. Of course, we can only ensure we provide the very best education

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and support for each and every student through working together in partnership with you as parents/carers. I therefore thank you all for your continued support in helping us to maintain the highest of standards and ensure the very best outcomes for your sons/daughters. In preparation for the new term, and if you have not done so recently, you might want to revisit the Home/School Agreement to remind yourselves of our agreed expectations.

On another note, I wanted also to thank all parents and carers who continue to ensure that their son(s)/daughter(s) attend school every day. In conjunction with the Local Authority, we continue to monitor all students' attendance very closely and intervene where necessary. However, I thought that this would be a good opportunity to remind you about the importance of a student having strong attendance at school.

In one school year, 90% attendance (the figure identified by the Government as 'Persistent Absence') equals four whole weeks of missed lessons (116 periods at Homewood). If the same student continues to attend only 90% of the year for the time they are at Homewood (Year 7 to Year 11), they will miss a total of 20 weeks (580 periods at Homewood). That is equivalent to half a school year lost. This will obviously have a very detrimental impact on a student's work and progress.

I do acknowledge that, as parents, it is natural for us to want the best for our children and to take care of them when they are ill. However, we know that sometimes parents will keep their children away from school when it is not strictly necessary to do so. With this in mind, we will be publishing some further information and guidance regarding attendance at the beginning of next term. In the meantime, please remember that the Government's guideline is for 100% attendance, and thank you very much to those parents and carers who continue to support the school and ensure that their son(s)/daughter(s) attend school every day.

Whilst it is important for all students to have a rest over the Christmas holiday, it is a beneficial time for students in Year 11 and Year 13 to undertake some revision – there are only 15 school weeks before the actual examinations in the summer! Students sitting BTEC and LIBF examinations in January will certainly need to spend some time revising, and all Year 13 students will need to make sure that they are prepared fully for their PPEs (pre-public examinations) which are the week beginning Monday 27th January.

Other important dates for next term include the Year 11 Revision Evening on Tuesday 28th January (between 4.30pm and 6.30pm) and the Consultation Days on Wednesday 8th January (between 3.00pm and 5.00pm), Friday 10th January (between 9.00 and 3.30pm) and Thursday 16th January (between 4.00 and 8.00pm). The Consultation Days provide an excellent opportunity for students to review their progress and identify areas for improvement. Conversations with Year 8 students in particular will help to aid their decision-making in preparation for the Choices Evening on Wednesday 5th February (between 4.00pm and 7.00pm). It will be during these events that we will be launching our revised Key Stage 3 curriculum model and exciting new approach to Year 9. Please see the school website for further information on all of the above, and make sure that you do not miss out on these key opportunities to help encourage and support your son/daughter.

Before closing, I would just like to pay tribute to those members of staff who will be leaving Homewood at the end of this term. We say goodbye to Ms Raman, Mrs Andrews, Miss White, Mr Beale, Mr McClure, Mrs Jones (Arts College) and Mrs Murrell. I am sure that you will join me in

thanking them most sincerely for their different contributions to the school, some of them over many years, and by wishing them all the very best for the future.

Finally, I know that Christmas is sometimes a difficult time for some members of our community, but I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope that everyone has a restful and peaceful holiday. I look forward to an exciting and successful 2020 at Homewood!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J K Single". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "J" and "K" and a clear "Single" at the end.

Mr J K Single
Principal