



Wadham School

A Church of England Community School

"Life in all its fullness" John 10:10



Sunday 2nd October 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Headteacher's Update 02.10.22

Where did September go? As I type this letter I'm listening to the London Marathon and have nothing but the utmost respect for anyone that displays such levels of resilience and commitment to achieving their goals. Hearing the personal stories of why people choose to run, and the many people behind the scenes that have given their support to help make it happen, I'm reminded that whatever our faith, if you truly believe, nothing is impossible.

This week, then, I'd like to open my update letter with a short prayer:

Dear God

Thank you that with you nothing is impossible.

Thank you that I can help someone to feel stronger, more positive and confident today.

Thank you that others will help me to feel stronger, more positive and confident today.

When things get tough thank you that I can always turn to you with my cares, my worries,

Confident that you care for me.

Amen

Reflecting on Week 4 for Wadham, we've come a long way since term started a short time ago, secure in our understanding of the current strengths and barriers we are experiencing as we seek to grow into the school we want to be, and the school our community deserve us to be.

Working together with open and honest communication between us, nothing is impossible and with your continued support I have every confidence that this inaugural year of 'new Wadham' will be our best year yet.

For this reason, the information to be shared this week can be best delivered under the headings of "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly."

Details are contained on the following pages and answer, I hope, some of the questions parents have raised over the last week. Although at times factors beyond our control may limit what we are able to immediately put in place, they will never shake our morale purpose of doing everything we can to provide the best possible provision for the children and young adults in our care.

As ever, do not hesitate in contacting me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Burgas
Headteacher

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The Good

Wadham's Mental Health Champions

I'm delighted to announce that we have appointed our very own student Mental Health Champions. Promoting a culture of "It's OK to not be OK," our champions have been tasked with raising the level of understanding around mental health and well-being issues locally and nationally, signposting those in need to available support. They will also be campaigning and fundraising for a number of local charities, see below for more details!



World Mental Health Day & Non-Uniform Day: Monday 10th October

We're fortunate to receive support from Crewkerne Wellbeing C.I.C and in recognition of the positive work they do with our students and their families, have decided to mark "World Mental Health Day" with a non-uniform day, donating all proceeds to them. Students are able to wear smart casual clothing and footwear, which should be respectful and fit for purpose. Students should bring a minimum donation of £1, which will be collected by their tutor in the morning.

INSET Day: Friday 21st October

A final reminder that there will be an additional INSET day at the end of this term on Friday 21st October. The school will be closed to students and time used to deliver further training to staff. Students return to Wadham after half term on Tuesday 1st November.

The Bad

Cycling to School: Road Safety

It's great to see students cycling to school – both for the environment and for their own personal health and fitness.

At the same time though, can I echo concerns raised by other road users and pedestrians that are commenting on the number of young people riding to school without proper safety equipment – namely a cycle helmet and working lights.

We would expect ALL cyclists to ensure they are wearing appropriate safety equipment when riding to/from school, that their bikes are roadworthy and that they have lights to be used when it is dark.

I have asked staff to challenge cyclists and insist helmets are worn and lights are used. Please can I ask that parents and carers do the same.

Picking Up / Dropping Off at School

This is never an easy issue to resolve, but please can I ask all road users to be mindful of their surroundings when waiting to drop off/collect children from school. In particular, please ensure that you only park in permitted areas, not blocking residents' drives or junction entrances.

I am keen to explore any and every solution with the council, but in the meantime am extremely grateful for a common sense and 'neighbourly' approach from our road users in showing consideration towards local residents.

Staff Absence

Unexpected circumstances beyond our control mean that we are currently faced with long-term staff absence in 2 subject areas – English and Geography. We already have adverts out to recruit a new SENDCo and a new English Teacher, with actions also in place to resolve Geography. In the meantime, we have secured agency staff to cover these absences and both Miss Davidson and Mr Tustin, as Curriculum Leads, are ensuring that work set is appropriate. I know that this is not an ideal situation, but please be assured that we will continue to do all that we can to minimise the impact this has on our students.

The Ugly

Finally, although this last item is limited to a very small group of students in Years 10 and 11, for transparency (and for your support) I'm sharing to all my concerns regarding incidents of offensive language and extreme defiance shown recently towards others.

We are an inclusive school. We see the best in everyone and promoting a culture of 'unconditional positive regard' we're working hard to ensure that no one is lost, forgotten or left behind.

Support is here for anyone that needs it, regardless of the reason why it is needed.

Sometimes a young person may need time to accept that we (parents and staff) really DO have their best interests at heart, and so long as they are willing to TRY and engage with support offered, we know positive change CAN be achieved.

It is not our purpose, however, to explain to a student that is refusing to attend lessons WHY they should do so. Similarly, in line with other public offices and places of work, we will not accept the use of offensive language or threatening behaviour towards others - in any form.

In protecting the learning and well-being of everyone at Wadham School, the following is made clear:

- Students that choose to behave in this way risk suspension.
- Students that choose to *persistently* behave in this way risk permanent exclusion.

Please contact me directly should you wish to discuss any aspect of this expectation, or if you feel that support is needed to help your son/daughter make more positive choices.

Richard Burgas 02.10.22

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