

Our Ref: DWt/LPu

1st December 2023

Dear Parent/Carers,

In the spirit of Advent, we have gone all festive here at Woodlands, I have finally succumbed, and we now have a Christmas tree in the atrium that I am determined will grow year on year. Thank you to all who have brought in their personalised baubles, the tree looks fantastic and a really fun thing to do.

I will be awarding an amazon voucher each day over the next few weeks to a randomly selected youngster, just to bring a little more festive cheer.

Thank you to all of you who have encouraged our youngsters to enter our Christmas card competition. The winners are:

1st place – Chrissette E who receives a £25.00 Amazon voucher.

2nd place – Libby G who has won a £15.00 Amazon voucher.

3rd place – Lewis B a £5.00 Amazon voucher.

They will see their designs made into Christmas cards that will be sent to other schools as well as staff this year. Some very impressive entries and a huge amount to go through, clearly, we have many budding artists.

Years 9, 10 and 11 will have their Christmas lunch on Wednesday 13th December with Years 7 and 8 on Thursday 14th December. The cost is £4.00, we have not increased prices for a few years but given that everything is going up we have no choice this year sadly.

Although we have many more weeks left in school before our Christmas break, we finish at 12.30pm on Wednesday 20th December.

Winter Plan - From this Monday 4th December

As most of you know when the weather drops, we revert to our Winter Plan. So, from Monday we move to our Winter Plan. This essentially means that our youngsters are allowed to eat and stay in the atrium as well as the Performance Hall at break and lunch due to the cold weather, have hard-standing areas to play on and the fields are out of bounds to protect them and not have a huge amount of mud in the building and youngsters missing learning time saying they need to get changed as they are muddy.

We will share all with our youngsters via a whole school virtual assembly on Monday morning at the start of tutor time. We have left this as late as possible as they are better outside, but it is colder, and we need now to implement our usual plan:

1. All can sit and eat in the atrium at break and lunch.
2. When eating indoors:
 - Coats and hoodies etc need to be off.
 - No phones out.
 - Remain on the ground floor unless attending a club and have a pass.
 - Sit down when eating.

- When finished eating put all rubbish in the bin and go outside so others can use the space.
3. When outside each year group has its own area as the fields are not to be used:
 - Year 7 stay where they are.
 - Year 7 have the rear courtyard.
 - Year 9 have the area by the old caretaker's house.
 - Year 10 have the area by the apple.
 - Year 11 have the area by the end of humanities.
 4. To ensure they are still able to play football each year group will have access to our All-Weather Pitch:
 - Monday Year 11
 - Tuesday Year 7
 - Wednesday Year 10
 - Thursday Year 8
 - Friday Year 9

This may very well stay in place until Easter but will monitor the weather and could bring forward.

Year 10 In-class PPEs

Not quite in the spirit of Christmas but the learning is still our core purpose, so next week sees Year 10 have their in-class PPEs. They have been preparing in lessons and through their remote assemblies.

As I have said on many occasions, assessments are just a chance to show off what you know and see which areas are needed to improve upon. They are a big part of school life as help all our youngsters prepare for their GCSEs with hopefully some high numbers on that provide them with more options moving forward beyond us. As with anything, preparation is key and so is reflection.

Year 11 PPE feedback week

This started this week and runs into next following on from all receiving their PPE results on Wednesday morning, as well as their advent calendars! In class Year 11 teachers will be feeding back results, areas which were very positive and clear ways forward to do even better next time. There is no point completing an assessment if there is no time going back through it to see where improvements can be made.

A great deal of work has gone into the preparation of these feedback sessions, and I know Year 11 have responded very positively.

Mr Riste – Safeguarding

The focus of the assembly this week was knife crime, which is an acknowledgement of the high number of incidents reported across the country this year so far (any is too many for a young life to be affected). Thankfully, this is not an issue amongst our pupils, who possess intelligence, awareness and morality in abundance, however it is also an inevitable consequence of social media that incidents involving weapons are increasing shared on social media.

As a result, we want our young people to understand the dangers, consequences and vulnerabilities involved for those who carry weapons with the aim of equipping our pupils with the knowledge to avoid and navigate any risks they may face. It was also shared that where pupils are concerned about something they read or see on the news, the school, parents and carers are there to speak to and

support. In surveys completed across Essex the biggest deterrent to carrying a weapon as identified by young people was - their parents.

Mrs Handford – Literacy

Well done to all pupils involved in DEAR time this week. Next week's DEAR time is on Wednesday period 1. Please remind your children that if they need to borrow a book, they can see me in M11 for help. We have a wide selection of books for pupils to borrow.

Cultural Capital:

Mrs Heseltine – Assistant Head Teacher - Cultural Capital

Post 16 – Mrs Robertson

Upcoming Post-16 application deadlines:

King John 6th Form – Friday 1st December

Mayflower 6th Form – Friday 1st December

Appleton 6th Form – Monday 11th December

Anglo European 6th Form – Wednesday 13th December

Sweyne Park 6th Form – Wednesday 20th December

When applying for any Post-16 destination pupils should use their predicted grades from the recent PPEs. These will be available from Monday.

Should you require any help please do not hesitate to contact me via email on kro@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk

Work Experience – Mrs Robertson

With the end of term fast approaching Year 10 must be actively seeking work experience for July. I shall speak more about this with pupils in Wednesday's assembly.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email on kro@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk

Enrichment Opportunities: Extra-Curricular Activities and Pupil Leadership Roles (Katie Heseltine)

A quick reminder to Year 10 pupils that the deadline for Prefect Applications will soon be upon them after Christmas. All applications need to be handed in to Mrs Heseltine.

[Enrichment Opportunities Page \(Clubs, Pupil Leadership Roles, Trips/Visits links\)](#)

ePraise Top Achievers Shout Out – Mrs Robertson

The pupils receiving the most AROE ePraise points this last week are:

Aspiration

Jayden	Year 10
Ryan	Year 7
Christian	Year 7
Leon	Year 9

Kaiden Year 8

Resilience

Cruz Year 11

Lewis Year 11

Frankie Year 10

Jayden Year 9

Harry Year 10

Bethany Year 10

George Year 10

Opportunity

Tayla Year 7

Julia Year 7

Ryan Year 7

Ronald Year 10

Excellence

Satvik Year 9

Thomas Year 11

Ellie-May Year 7

Madisyn Rose Year 9

Well done all and keep it up!

The House System at Woodlands – Mrs Robertson

There is a week to go before the final House Points are totalled for this term. Winning houses across all year groups will receive a free break on the same day as their end of term assembly.

Year 7 House and Deputy House captains will be announced in the end of term assembly.

AROE Curriculum Lessons – Miss Ash

Please ensure that you have checked the AROE lesson Parental Communication Calendar for current half term to familiarise yourselves with the topics due to be covered after half term:

[\(AUT 1B\) AROE PARENT COMMS CALENDAR 2023.24.pptx](#)

Year 7 – **Building Relationships (relationships)** - This unit will cover self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries.

Year 8 – **Community and Careers (Living in the Wider World)** - This unit will cover equality of opportunity in careers and life choices, and different types and patterns of work.

Year 9 – **Employability Skills (Living in the Wider World)** - This unit will cover employability and online presence.

Year 10 – **Mental Health (Health and Wellbeing)** - This unit will cover mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change.

Year 11 – **Building for the Future (Health and Wellbeing)** - This unit covers self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities.

All information regarding how we deliver Relationships, Sex and health in AROE lessons can be found here: [Woodlands School - AROE Curriculum](#)

[RSE Parental Right to withdraw form](#)

An invitation has been sent home to all parent/carers regarding our upcoming RSE and HE policy review on Thursday 7th December from 5.00pm to 5.30pm. If you would like to attend, please complete the MS forms linked in the letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email on has@woodlandsschool.essex.sch.uk should you have any queries/concerns.

Assemblies – Mrs Heseltine

Thank you to Mrs Riste for delivering assemblies to Years 7-10 on Knife Crime, a very informative assembly for all. An additional thank you to Mrs Jordan for delivering the Year 11 Results event assembly on Wednesday, a great success for all.

Next week Pupils in Years 7-9 and 11 will receive an assembly on Human Rights delivered by Mr Roberts, and on Wednesday Year 10 will have their Work Experience assembly led by Mrs Robertson, and Mrs Hanford will be launching the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge event with this year group.

[Assembly Themes 2023.24](#)

Dates for Diaries

Year 11 Preparing for Success Event – Thursday 25th January 2024 6.00pm to 7.00pm

Moving forward

I have, unusually for me, been out at a few other secondary schools this week seeing how they do things and looking to ensure that we have the very best ideas and practices here as we continue to move forward.

We know that quick fixes don't work and that has always been my mantra since taken over almost five years ago. But we will remain an outward facing school who will always strive for the best for all in our community.

Best wishes,



Mr David Wright
Head Teacher