

13th September 2016

Dear parents and carers,

I was delighted to welcome all our students to school last week. Myself, and all our staff, are really pleased to see the students: we are looking forward to an excellent year for everyone at our school.

I want to give you an update on our results this year. We are proud that our Year 11 and Year 13 students did so well. Overall we sustained or exceeded previous results. For year 11, 69% of our students gained 5A*-C grades including Maths and English (this compares to 56% as a national average last year). The government has introduced a new measure called Progress 8: the average school in Britain has a progress 8 score of 0. We believe our Progress 8 score will be approximately +0.5, which means that each student on average gets a half grade higher for each GCSE than occurs nationally: +0.5 is definitely a good score for any school! Moving focus to the sixth form, our year 13 students gained outstanding results, with 56% A*-B grades and 99.5% pass grades. Of our Year 13 students 125 have been placed at University or Art School. We have been delighted also to have so many recent applications from inside and outside our school to join the SNS sixth form. Do see our website if you would like more information about the results or the sixth form.

At the end of last term many of you completed a parent survey for us: thank you very much for your time in doing this. The leadership team will be reporting to governors on the outcomes and our actions to follow this up. Overall parents are largely very happy with our school, which is good news. Particular strengths were seen to be our commitment to equality and diversity, and our care for students. Areas where you felt we could do better, in particular, were giving you information to support your child at home and getting the children to contribute to the community more. This feedback is really helpful for us and we will be making sure that you get more advice about helping your child at home – and we will be ensuring the children contribute further to the community. We will be discussing the survey outcomes and our actions in more detail at the first parents' forum of the year on Tuesday 18th October at 7pm.

Within school we annually have some priorities which direct our school development. This year they are: a) further improving behaviour inside and outside school, and increasing student buy-in; b) improving differentiation – the way in which teachers ensure they challenge and support the full range of students in each class; and c) ensuring an excellent professional development programme for all our staff. I am sure your child will see positive outcomes from the work we do in all these areas.

We would also like your help with a particular aspect of behaviour – which is student behaviour outside school. We expect every one of our students to make a strong positive contribution to the local community by behaving considerately, safely and responsibly outside school. This does form part of the home school agreement and is part of the school's area of influence. Since 2015 our home school agreement has set the standard of students behaving impeccably outside school on the way home. Of course this expectation of behaviour also applies to students on the way to school and to those older students outside at lunchtime. We expect every child to behave perfectly when in uniform, or out of uniform, in any public space. Students who do not do this are subject to school sanctions. I have affirmed this in assemblies. Please ensure you read this paragraph with your child, making your and our expectations clear about time outside school. We do recommend that students

make their way home directly after school, unless they are staying for homework club or joining one of the range of other after school activities. Do let me know if you have any queries or comments about this.

I am looking forward to seeing you at a range of the events coming up this year in school. The first of these are the Year 7 parents' support evening on Wednesday 28th September and the parents' forum on Tuesday 18th October.

I am attaching a list of dates for this term below.

With very best wishes,

Annie Gammon

Headteacher

Wednesday 28th September – Year 7 parents' support evening 6pm

Friday 7th October – School INSET day – school is closed for students

Tuesday 11th October – Late start following the second open evening. School starts at 10.55am for students.

Tuesday 18th October – Parents' forum – 7pm

Monday 24th October – Friday 28th October – Half term

Wednesday 2nd November – Year 11 Parents' evening 5pm-7.30pm

Thursday 3rd November - Late start following the parents' evening. School starts at 10.55am for students.

Tuesday 8th November – Sixth form open evening for Year 11 students and parents/carers

Wednesday 16th November to Friday 18th November – School show "We will rock you."

Thursday 23rd November – Year 13 parents' evening 5pm-7.30pm

Friday 24th November - Late start following the parents' evening. School starts at 10.55am for students.

Wednesday 30th November – Year 9 parents' support evening 6pm

Thursday 15th December and Friday 16th December – Winter music concert

Thursday 22nd December – Christmas Holiday starts

Wednesday 4th January 2017 - School INSET day – school is closed for students

Thursday 5th January – First day of Spring term for students