



CHENEY SCHOOL

Think for yourself, act for others

Headteacher: Mr Rob Pavey

Cheney School
Cheney Lane
Headington
OX3 7QH

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Rob Pavey, Headteacher

17 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

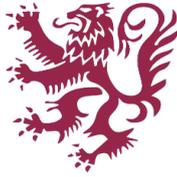
Finally, I have some of the normal exciting news that tends to go in end of term letters to share with you. The first thing to be excited about is the **Christmas Show**, which went live last week. Congratulations to all the students, staff and families who made *Christmask Wishes* possible: it was a huge amount of work to produce, but worth every moment of it, and is a wonderful showcase for the talent we have here at Cheney. Thank you also to over 1,700 of you who have already watched it online. If you've missed it, you can watch it here: <http://ow.ly/9TNF50CLF1x>

If you love Cheney Music and want to support us, we have set up a fundraising appeal specifically for the Music department. Find out more about what even a small donation could help fund: <http://ow.ly/LQsi50CLF1y>

Another exciting thing is our first **house competition**, run by the art department on the theme of 'The New Normal'. The competitions are designed to be inclusive, with house points awarded for every entry, as well as for the winners; it was very heartening to see over 100 entries. Particular congratulations of course to Isobel, Hannah, Caleb, Amy, Marina, Vivian, Dora, Kiara, Megan, Kauan, Imogen, Zuzana, Aleksandra, Freya, Matthew, Nathan and Tom - our first ever house competition winners - for their fantastic, reflective art works. You can see their pieces as part of [Christmask Wishes](#) and also on [Facebook](#).

The **Rumble Museum** and the **Classics Centre**, under the wonderful Lorna Robinson, cannot be deterred by the minor inconvenience of a global pandemic. Although not all of the planned activities and trips have been possible, there are two initiatives in Year 8: a graphic novel involving the Greek gods in Oxford, which is due to be published in January, and the museum council has been involved in establishing the tree trail around Cheney. In Year 7, we are very proud of Siri Krznaric, who won the **Wild About Writing** short story competition for writers aged 7-12. You can read her entry here: <https://pages.hachette.co.uk/piers-torday-writing-competition/>

On the academic side, I am very proud of our **Sixth Form mathematicians**, who entered the Náboj international maths competition. It is a team event, and our teams placed 8th, 17th and 21st in the UK. There have also been significant individual successes in the Senior Maths Challenge, with 15 bronze, 5 silver and 2 gold awards, and two students, Alex Nikic and Jude Smith, were invited to compete in the next round. In Year 13, we have 11 students currently going through interviews at **Oxford or Cambridge universities**: we wish them all the very best of luck, and we would like to thank David Gimson and the rest of the Sixth Form team for the huge amount of work they have done to prepare them. We have also run a full set of **Year 11 mocks** (Mrs Fischer, our exams officer, said the students were exemplary). This shouldn't really count as exciting news, but it actually points to the most important thing of all: we are delivering a full education to our young people, and we are keeping things as normal as we possibly can. I know that there are lots of other very positive things going on around the school,



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which I don't have the space to mention, and I very much look forward to the full return of clubs, sport and extracurricular activities on the other side of the pandemic.

This leads me on to some very positive news about the way the school is moving forward in general, despite the circumstances. Our attendance is up significantly on last year (over 94%, compared to a national average of 80% for secondary schools), and all the data on behaviour shows a marked improvement as well: fewer detentions, fewer days lost to exclusion, fewer days in internal isolation. Behaviour and sanctions are not things I want to dwell on, and we would like to get to a position where no punishment is necessary, but the figures point to the fact that our students are behaving sensibly almost all the time, and this is becoming increasingly the norm for everyone.

The other very positive message is that our students and staff have got used to teaching and learning online, and the engagement with remote learning this week has been very impressive. It is not perfect (we are the first to acknowledge this), but we are light years ahead of where we were during the first lockdown, and this is down to the enormously hard work of our staff, the resilience and helpfulness of our students and the ongoing support of our parent body. As a personal note, I would like to thank all of our parents for the support they have shown the school over the course of this term; I have passed on many of the kind messages to staff, who greatly appreciate them. I am sorry that I am not able to reply personally to all of the messages.

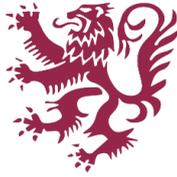
Thank you also to our incredible PTA, **Cheney Friends**, for their ongoing support to the school. Thanks to your donations, this term's Cheney Friends on-line second-hand uniform sale has been a huge success, with over 40 orders placed; the first collection afternoon is happening this weekend. We also have Cheney Friends to thank for some amazingly creative fundraising solutions, enabling our community to support the school through Amazon Smile and EasyFundraising, and establishing two Charity Action Fund appeals which give donors the option to Gift Aid their donation. Find out more about [Cheney Friends](#) and their [fundraising activities](#) on the website. I would also like to thank everybody who has contributed to the **laptop appeal**: we have raised over **£19,500** to date, which is immensely generous. More on the laptops below.

Thank you to all the families who supported our Winter Appeal this year. The food, toiletries and other goodies you donated will be delivered to The Porch Day Centre, Crisis and Oxford Mutual Aid over the next few days. In these uncertain times, your generosity was very much appreciated.

Administrative points

School will continue to carry out **track and trace** on any new positive cases up until 23 December. Until this date, please direct emails directly to me rpavey@cheney.oxon.sch.uk rather than going through year teams, as I think it is very important that they can properly switch off over Christmas and New Year.

You may have heard about plans for **mass testing** in schools via lateral flow tests, which will enable every student and every member of staff to be tested every week. We will support this initiative and will put it in place as soon as possible, but the plans from the DfE are currently



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at a very early stage and no thought has been given to how they can be rolled out in practice. I'm afraid that this will certainly not be ready to go directly after the New Year.

You may also have read about a staggered start to the new school year, which I have read with a due sense of irony. This again has not been thought through: media reports suggest that it is to give schools time to implement the mass testing system. Plans for this are at such an unformed stage that a week's planning time will not help. School has received no official notification of this, so as far as I am concerned, **we will reopen on schedule to all year groups on Tuesday 5 January**, unless there is a public health or student safety reason to have only a partial opening. I will be in touch if anything changes.

You will remember we placed a large order for **laptops** some time ago, and we offered parents the opportunity to buy one at cost. The delivery date was due to be December, but we have recently had news that global supply problems means that Lenovo cannot get them to us before March. We have been looking for alternatives, but so far without success. We have also applied to the government fund for laptops, which promised 130 machines on the second day of a forced closure. So far, they have not arrived, although we live in hope. There will be more information on these in due course, but it is unfortunately beyond our control.

We have a small number of good quality, second-hand **coats** in school. These were donated to us last winter to be available for free to students who do not have a warm coat they can wear to school. If your child is in need over the coming colder months, please contact your year team to discuss this in confidence in the New Year.

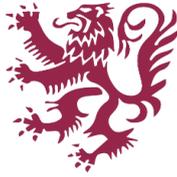
Earlier this week all families were sent a letter about **Free School Meals** with information about the voucher system operating over the Christmas break. Please check your inboxes/the website: your family may be entitled to receive support: <http://ow.ly/JZjW50CKEo2>. If you are entitled to Free School Meals and have any questions or experience difficulty accessing the voucher system over the break, please contact Ms Hussain: shu@cheney.oxon.sch.uk

To support girls during their period when they are not in school, we have **free sanitary products** in reception. Students can pop in and take what they need from the box (masked and sanitised please). Reception is open this week and 21-23 Dec (8-5), but closed 24 Dec-4 Jan.

When we return to school in January, we ask all of our students to ensure that they are meeting our **uniform expectations**.

Our uniform expectations are:

- Cheney School Blazer
- Black trousers (not jeans) or a black skirt
- Black shoes or trainers
- Plain white shirt or polo shirt
- Optional: school jumper or cardigan
- Face masks are compulsory unless a student is medically exempt, in which case they need to be wearing their exemption lanyard



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Hoodies and non-school jumpers are not acceptable. If a student is cold, they should be wearing a school jumper or a proper coat in addition to their blazer. In January, we will be issuing a 30 minute detention to anyone not in the correct uniform as well as confiscating any hoodies or non-school jumpers. Please support your child in making the right uniform choices by ensuring they have everything they need to start school in January on the right foot. If you are having any issues with getting hold of any of the right items of uniform, please do contact your year teams. We have some spare uniform, as well as the stock of warm coats.

When students have PE, they need to come to school in their PE kit. The PE kit is as follows:

- Black/navy blue and dark grey tracksuit bottoms/ shorts of sports leggings
- Red t- shirt (school logo or plain)
- PE sweatshirt (available from Stevenson's via the school website) or alternatively a plain black/navy or dark grey sweatshirt with no hood.
- Trainers

Light grey or coloured joggers, hoodies, jumpers and sweatshirts with large logos and football shirts are not acceptable.

We will continue to have a strong focus on uniform expectations in January and will continue to confiscate items such as hoodies and coloured sweatshirts which can be collected after a three day period of quarantine. You can access further details about our school uniform on the school website here: <https://www.cheney.oxon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Update-Uniform-Guidelines-Sept-2020.pdf>

Thank you for your support with this important school expectation.

On behalf of all of the staff, I wish all of you a restful and peaceful holiday and I look forward to seeing students again in the New Year.

Kind regards

Rob Pavey, Headteacher