

Mr Pavey, Headteacher

21 July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It is the end of the summer term, the holidays are here, and we have all survived this year. Normally, I would have a list of achievements and events to celebrate, but this year I take enormous pride in saying that we have done *some* sport (thank you, basketball team and rowing), we have had *some* outside speakers (thank you History department and the marvellous Rumble Museum), we have got *some* clubs back into operation (thank you debaters and PE), and we have had a (sort of) live performance (thank you Music department for the fantastic summer show on the field on Monday - watch it online if you haven't already

I know I have missed lots of things off my list (for example, we have just become the first school in the world to receive Energy Conscious Organisation status, so we are up there with Rolls Royce!), so I apologise to everyone who has been quietly doing amazing things, and who I have not included. And of course we are finishing with Sports Day (thank you, PE department): as I write this, school is full of over-excited students painting themselves strange colours and making banners (and a few zen-like playing chess amid the chaos), which is all as it should be.

I can also announce the winner of the first House Competition! **Congratulations to Hawking House.** The final rankings are below:

1. Hawking (111, 912 House Points)
2. Seacole
3. Turing
4. Yousafzai
5. Mandela

The House Competition really makes me proud of Cheney (thank you Mrs Broom and our 5 Heads of House), as we have set it up and kept it running despite lockdowns, bubbles and all the other things that have made life harder this year. It has already reached the stage that I was hoping to see: things are happening, and competitions are being organised without me knowing about them! Lots more developments are planned for the new school year, including a proper return of the student council, student leadership and a more predictable sequence of competitions.

I am trying to avoid going on about the pandemic, as we have all had more than enough of it, but I do want to say something positive about 'learning loss'. You will have read and heard lots in the media about learning loss, and about how this



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generation of young people are doomed to a life of grinding misery and blunted chances: I do not believe a word of it. The progression for all our leavers is exactly as it would have been in a normal year (we are continuing to work hard with individuals who do not have a clear place to go on to, as we would in any year), and our students have had the full curriculum over the course of the year. To be sure, the livestreaming mixed economy is not perfect, and online learning is not as good for the majority of students, but none of our students has been left with massive gaps in their education. If there is learning loss, it is that some knowledge has not been passed on, or some units have not been taught (perhaps English have taught one fewer text than usual, for example, or some Maths thing has been missed), but the key skills are in place, and the progression for our young people is unharmed. After all, how many of us can remember the detail of what we learned at GCSE? The fact that I am reduced to saying a 'Maths thing' demonstrates this very clearly; I did AS Maths slightly over 30 years ago, and was very mediocre at it. Our young people are resilient, and will be fine if we say they will be fine, and will be harmed if we insist on glooming on about damage.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the whole community: to the parents who have been so supportive throughout the year, to the students who have (mainly) just got on with the important business of being young (which often includes paying attention and doing what we say) and to all of our staff. I couldn't have been better supported, or have a nicer and more positive set of colleagues to work with: they have adapted to the weird and fluctuating world of Covid with good humour, grace and professionalism at all levels. Our site and catering staff have done an amazing job, our classroom teachers have kept at it, and our departmental leads have been extremely thorough, organised and meticulous, especially around the exam grading. Despite the best efforts of the virus, this has been a very successful year, and I believe that Cheney is stronger now in almost every respect than before the pandemic. I will be in touch in August with some start-of-the-new-year type stuff, and will include a financial overview (you will see what I mean about things being positive) and some development priorities for the new year.

In the meantime, I wish all of our students, families and staff a very restful and well deserved break.

Kind regards

Rob Pavey
Headteacher