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Dear Parents

This half term has passed incredibly quickly and the long days of summer are becoming a distant memory as the nights begin to draw in. We do feel, however, that this half term has been incredibly successful as the students and staff have settled into a new school year.

We would like to thank you for the support we have received this half term. The students have been immaculately dressed in their school uniform. We are immensely proud of all of them. Not only have students been wearing their uniform with pride, but they have also been working incredibly hard in classes. Already, thousands of Reward points have been awarded, surpassing the total for the whole of last year!

Duke of Edinburgh continues to grow from success to success, with more Year 9 students choosing to begin their D of E journey this year and others planning to take it a step further by completing the Silver Award. A number of trips have been organised already this year. The majority of Year 7 are attending a residential trip in November and Year 11 have a reward shopping trip organised at the end of November. Trips are being organised for other year groups over the course of the year and we will inform you in due course.

The school has also welcomed a number of visitors to the school. The RAF spoke to Year 11 and had Year 8 completing PE drills. Health and Social Care students welcomed Clare Oughton from the Surgical Team at the QEH, and of course, we also had a surprise visit from OFSTED.

The Music department have been working hard and the school choir and new Year 7 Choir performed beautifully at the Year 6 Open Evening. Also, look out for news of the Christmas Carol Service and music performance after half term. Please encourage your child to get involved in music and other Arts performances, or check the website for sports clubs and teams they could join and participate in. Continuing the Arts theme, all of Year 11 will be able to see a commissioned professional performance of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* next half term, to help support their GCSE English Literature.

With the first half term nearly over, teachers and students are turning their minds to assessing the work covered so far. Year 7 and 8 have their first set of assessments this month. Each year group will now have a minimum of two formal assessments each year. These tests will be cumulative, assessing all work covered since the beginning of the Key Stage. The marks attained will be used to report home to parents. Reports are changing this year: students in lower years will no longer receive target grades or predicted grades but all reports will continue to show an Attitude to Learning grade between 1 and 4. Reports will also inform parents of the percentage mark achieved in each subject's assessment. Over time parents should see this percentage improve and your child making progress. Only the last report of Year 10, and the Year 11 reports, will show both attainment marks and a predicted grade. Reports will also be reduced in number to two per year, following each assessment.

At the beginning of every lesson the teacher carries out a short quiz on previous learning. It would be helpful if parents could encourage their child to reread previous learning to help them prepare for these mini tests. This in turn, will help in the more formal assessments, which take place over the course of the year. This would be particularly useful for Year 11 students, who will start their first set of exams this year in November. The recently issued Year 11 50 Questions booklet will help with this. It is also important that you are aware that Year 11 students are now starting to apply for Sixth Form, Apprenticeships and

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College places over the next half term: it was encouraging to see so many Year 11 students at the Springwood Sixth Form Open evening. If you require advice and guidance regarding post-16 futures, please contact your child's form tutor. We expect all Year 11 students to have both a plan A and plan B in place before the Christmas break.

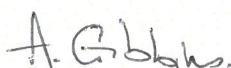
Lastly, the Student Council are keen on raising money for charity and a local firefighter's charity has been chosen for this year. As a way of rewarding students for excellent behaviour, attitude and adherence to the uniform, it was decided to allow for the Student Council's request to have a non-uniform day on Thursday 17 October. This was an excellent success, raising £644.50.

Finally, can we wish all the students and families a restful break after what has been a very busy, but rewarding half term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Hirst', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Mr J Hirst**  
**Headteacher**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Gibbins', written in a cursive style.

**Mrs A Gibbins**  
**Head of School**