



Thursday 28th March 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians

As you will note from the length of this end of term letter, it has been a wonderfully productive term for students' learning experiences in and out of the classroom. I do hope you take a moment to read about all of the things that your children have been able to partake in this term.

On the sporting front, the Year 4/5 mixed team competed in the Ocklynge Cup, where they emerged as the runners-up after a thrilling penalty shootout. Our Year 6 students also had a successful run in the Albion Cup, with the boys' team finishing as the runners-up in East Sussex and the girls' team winning the championship. In the Collings Cup, our mixed team were crowned champions, while the girls' team won the Wayne Field Cup. Both teams demonstrated great skill and determination throughout the competition.

The Year 7 team made it to the final of the Eastbourne Schools Partnership, where they put up a great fight against St Catherine's, losing 2-1 at the Saffrons Sports Club. The Year 10 team reached the final of the Eastbourne Schools Partnership Division 2, facing Hailsham Community College. Despite their best efforts, they lost 2-0. Both our Year 8 and Year 11 teams narrowly missed the finals, finishing just one goal short on goal difference.

In an impressive display of determination and athleticism, five of our talented students finished in the top 10 at the Sussex Schools Cross Country event held at Waterhall. As a result of their remarkable performance, they were selected to represent Sussex at the esteemed Inter Counties Championships, which took place at Ardingly. We are immensely proud of their accomplishments and look forward to their continued success. Adding to the Cross-Country achievements, five more students from Years 7 and 8 finished in the top 10 at the Sussex Schools Cross-Country event at Christ's Hospital. Their hard work paid off, securing their spots to represent Sussex Schools at the inter-counties.

Our Sports Leaders did an exceptional job hosting various Netball tournaments, including the Eastbourne Area Netball Tournament, where our Year 6 team emerged as the runners-up. Our students' leadership skills and sportsmanship shone through as they hosted the South Downs Area School Games Netball Final and the KS4 Eastbourne Area Swimming Gala. Eight of our Primary phase students exhibited exceptional endurance and skill in the second round of the Sussex School Games at the Southdown Area Finals in Lewes. Their dedication paid off, with all of them qualifying in the top 15. The qualifiers from Year 5 and 6 also competed at the Sussex School Games Final this week.

Overall, it has been a highly successful term for sport at Gildredge House. Our students' remarkable accomplishments across different sports reflect their dedication, teamwork, and passion. We are thrilled to see their continued growth and success in various competitions.

In the Primary phase, we have continued our regular termly visits to Beechwood Care Home, fostering meaningful connections between our students and the residents through conversations, shared interests, and collaborative activities such as reading, games, crafts, and singing. In the Early Years, all students have benefitted from our regular trips to the local library to support their love of reading and how to use a library.

Our inaugural Performance Poetry Competition organised by Mrs Punter-Bruce was a resounding success, and we hope to establish this as a cherished tradition for years to come. We appreciate the enthusiasm and talent displayed by our students and look forward to witnessing their growth as performers. Throughout the term, we have been developing students' mapping skills, which has led to engaging walks in the local area to explore our community's features. Special thanks must go to Lady Lucas for her unwavering support and encouragement of these initiatives. Year 6 students embarked on an unforgettable PGL adventure, where they developed their teamwork skills, embraced new challenges, and demonstrated courage in various exciting activities.

Our Primary phase team have been supporting student teachers, providing valuable guidance and fostering a dynamic learning environment that benefits both the students and the aspiring teachers. On World Book Day, we celebrated our love of reading with great enthusiasm and were delighted to see so many parents joining in for reading sessions in the Primary phase classrooms. Thank you; your involvement is instrumental in nurturing a passion for reading among our students.

Several immersive experiences were organised to enhance our curriculum, such as the Year 6 visit to Newhaven Fort and World War 2 Day, Hands-on History sessions about the Romans, a Herstmonceux Science trip, and in-school workshops including using our VR headsets to visit historic landmarks. We continued our commitment to supporting charities by participating in the NSPCC Number Day and celebrating the RNLI's 200th Anniversary. The amount raised is still being finalised. This term also saw the return of our Scholastic Book Fair run by our Year 13 Business Students, where we raised an incredible £2800 which in turn means we have a significant amount to spend on books for our school. We are grateful for your support with these events.

This term saw the relaunch of our Prize Giving Ceremony which was held at the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne. This annual event recognises and celebrates the individual and collective achievements of our young people, and I am incredibly proud and privileged to have awarded so many of our students for their academic, sporting, arts and service achievements. The ceremony was a great success and served as a testament to the school's commitment to its students' academic and personal growth. It highlighted the importance of hard work, dedication, and persistence in achieving success and applauded the students for their remarkable achievements. Our Chair of Governors, Richard Thornhill, gave the keynote speech, emphasising the importance of Ambition, one of our Aspire values. The ceremony was well-attended by parents, staff, and students, who gathered together to congratulate the winners. We were delighted that Lord and Lady Lucas, alongside Caroline Ansell MP, were among some of our special guests on the night.

In the Secondary phase, some of our students embarked on a thrilling ski trip to Austria. This international adventure honed their skiing skills and fostered camaraderie and teamwork among the students. A big thank you must go to the staff involved in organising and overseeing this enriching experience over their weekends.

Twelve of our Year 10 students graduated from the Scholars Programme at Goldsmiths University this term. Over the course of the programme, students were exposed to the experiences of higher education and they each completed their own dissertation, which was assessed using University grading. Two students even achieved a 1st.

Our Year 9 students had the opportunity to participate in Take Your Child to Work Day, allowing them to explore potential career paths and gain valuable insights into the professional world. We appreciate your support in facilitating these experiences for our students. We are proud of the commitment demonstrated by our students in undertaking

two Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. These challenging endeavours foster resilience, self-reliance, and collaboration; qualities essential to their future success.

This term's Parent Partnership events were a remarkable success, with numerous parents attending and supporting our review of our Home School Agreement. Your active participation in these events helps us build a stronger, more supportive school community. I would also like to congratulate the many students who have achieved the Bronze and Silver badge for ASPIRE points. Their dedication and hard work exemplify the school's values, and we are thrilled to see students nearing the threshold for a Gold badge.

We continue working closely with our local community, and I regularly attended the Upperton Neighbourhood Panel. The panel is looking to refresh how it functions to ensure it reflects the young people and families it serves. The school has been working with a former Gildredge House student and local resident, Miss Meyer, on a survey for students to help us gauge the children's understanding of the idea of 'community' and where they live, play, work, and the interests they share. We would like parents of students in Year 5-Year 13 to ask their child/ren to complete the short survey over the Easter break. The link will be published in this week's newsletter.

I would also like to thank the brilliant FoGH team for their organisation of the Primary Disco, the Easter Fayre, and the Quiz Night, all of which were a huge success and were well-attended by our students, staff and parents. Look out for more information on FoGH events for next term.

In addition to all these experiences and opportunities, I have personally spent a large part of the past few weeks in lessons and observing teaching and learning. I have been very impressed by the attitude to learning, quality of teaching and progress made by students across all phases in the school. I have also been particularly impressed by the small group interventions that have been taking place before, during and after school to support students who are in the early stages of reading across the Primary and Secondary phases. As a result of these interventions, students have made significant progress in their reading age, with one student making as much as six years progress in just a matter of weeks. This is a testament to their determination, and the dedication and support of our Inclusion team.

Finally, we are aware that some parents allow their children to play on the playground or school field after the school day, and some students arrive early on school days to play football on the field. After the Easter break, the use of the field and playground for non-organised activities will no longer be allowed outside of school hours. This decision has been made with the concern for the safety and well-being of our students; there is a risk of injury, and without supervision from Gildredge House staff, we cannot guarantee the safety of students using these facilities outside of school hours. We understand that this may be an inconvenience for some families, but the safety of our students is our top priority. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

In conclusion, this term has been filled with engaging and enriching experiences that have contributed to the growth and development of our students, thanks to your support and the hard work and dedication of our staff. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to another successful term ahead when we return to school on Monday 15th April.

Kind regards



Mr Craig Bull
Executive Head Teacher