

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Optimism and achievement

We are hurtling through the month of November and it feels quite remarkable that this will be my last newsletter for this month! Over the past 5 days we have been involved in the hosting and organisation of the Uttlesford Careers Fair which took place on Tuesday at Saffron Hall. It was great to see the range of employers engaged in conversations with our pupils at the event and hopefully it might just have provided some inspiration for some of our young people on what their future path might look like. On Wednesday afternoon, we welcomed a colleague from the University of Hertfordshire to come and speak to our sixth form students about university life and what it might entail for them. We also had excellent engagement from our year 8 parents and carers yesterday evening with appointments at our virtual parents' evening. And, of course, the mock exam season rolls on. We have received several thank you emails this week from parents and carers of year 11 pupils about the support that has been provided. We greatly appreciate this feedback, as well as of course your thoughts on how we might make the process even smoother for future years, and it has been excellent to see how hard our year 11 pupils are working to achieve their very best. This will hold them in great stead for the public examinations in May.

Further updates this week are as follows:

1. **Sixth Form applications** - It is pleasing to see that Sixth Form applications continue to be submitted both from our year 11 pupils and external pupils from other settings. A reminder to pupils that if they haven't applied as yet, the deadline for this is the 15th of December. You can access a link to the application by clicking [here](#).
2. **Application for Free School Meals** - This is a reminder to all our parents and carers that your child/ren may be eligible for free school meals. For further information on this including a criteria and application form, please click here which will take you through to Essex's dedicated website page.
3. **Communication with the Academy** - A reminder that if you wish to raise an issue, concern or provide some positive feedback about our Academy, the best way to receive feedback and reassurance is to contact us directly. We always aim to respond to you as soon as we possibly can. As we have advised before, please contact your child's/ren's form tutor in the first instance.
4. **Site security** – The Academy continues to work hard on trying to ensure that the site security is as robust as possible despite its difficult layout. As you know, over the summer period we installed an improved CCTV system and brand-new access control on buildings. We now intend to progress with the third and final phase of this project and are seeking planning permission for a significant fencing project throughout the site. This will mean that our community is more secure but will also affect how visitors access our site on a day-to-day basis. We will provide you with further information once the planning process is complete.
5. **Christmas Card competition** - A reminder that we have launched our annual Christmas Card Competition for this year. The competition is for all year groups and there are art prizes to be won! Additionally, the winning card will be sent out to the local community on my behalf and JFAN. Pupils can use any material they like to create the card as long as it is 2D and can be photocopied clearly. Work must be handed to your child's art teacher by **Friday 1st December**.
6. **Pop-up pre-loved uniform shop** - On 15th January, from 9:00-12:00, there will be a "pop up" pre-loved uniform shop in Main Reception for parents and carers of our community. Should you wish to come in and have a look, please park in the visitor spaces outside Mandela Building (D Block) and head into Main Reception.
7. **Anglian Learning Parent and Carer Engagement Survey – Have Your Say!**
Don't forget to complete our Anglian Learning parent and carer engagement survey by Friday 8 December. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential and will take no more than 15 minutes to complete via this [link](#).

This concludes the updates for this week. As I often to say to colleagues, it is a real privilege to work with young people and the pupils of JFAN. Despite the obvious challenges that young people experience, and these challenges I would argue are far greater than many of the generations that came before this one, in school we see them saying thank you at the end of lessons and doing their best in the sports hall or the multi-gym or reading that extract to the class. We see them quite literally helping a friend up from the floor who has tripped up or explaining

to a visitor what direction they need to go if they are lost. We see them responding to questions or asking ones of their own and naming parts of the body in French.

It's these types of things, we see every day and it makes us feel very hopeful about the future.

In the words of the superb Helen Keller, "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Duncan Roberts

Principal