

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Back on track

Firstly, I hope you had an enjoyable half-term last week. The return to school these past five days has been really positive despite having some very lively weather to contend with! As always after a break, it's great to welcome our young people back to the Academy. It has been great to walk around the school and see the pupils engaged and motivated in classrooms and learning spaces. My morning crossing duty, although slightly wet at times this week, is always a pleasure, welcoming pupils as they arrive at school for the day. We have also had some impressive football results this week in the Essex Cup. Our under-16 boys beat Gosfield School 19-0 and our under-16 girls beat SWCHS 6-1. Both teams go into the next round with confidence and we look forward to seeing how their cup run develops!

Updates this week for you are as follows:

1. Attendance – Our attendance so far this academic year continues to be positive and I would like to thank all our parent and carer community for their important role in this. Our overall attendance currently sits at 94.7% with year 7 at an impressive 98%. There is no doubt that there remains a strong correlation between positive academic progress and attendance above 96%. If you would like further information about our attendance processes, such as how to request a leave of absence for your child, all details are on our website which can be accessed [here](#).
2. Trainers – Please can the Academy remind parents that trainers with a sports logo such as a Nike tick are not acceptable and not part of our uniform policy, unless there is a medical reason and the pupil has a note from their parent/carer to explain this. The Academy understands that the weather conditions mean an increase in more troubling walking conditions and will accept that some pupils may need to wear more practical shoes when travelling to and from school. However, school shoes must be in their bag and pupils must change into these as soon as they get to school. Smart cards will be signed if trainers are worn during the day without a medical explanation.
3. Co-curricular clubs – A reminder that there is a rich range of co-curricular clubs at Joyce Frankland every lunchtime and after school. Pupils do not need to book to attend these clubs, they simply need to go to the location of the club and take part. The timetable has not changed this half-term and it includes experiences such as multi-gym for girls in years 9, 10 and 11 and debate club on Wednesdays, maths puzzle club on Mondays, history club on a Fridays and much, much more throughout the week. If pupils would like to find out more, they can speak with their form tutor.
4. Careers Fair – We are excited to announce that we are once again in partnership with Harlow Regional College, Forest Hall School, Helena Romanes School and Saffron Walden County High School to host the Uttlesford Careers Fair on 21st November 2023 at Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden. There will be stalls from a range of employers in fields such as construction, leisure, engineering, science and the public sector. We will share further information about this, including an advertising flyer, on our social media and through communication in the coming weeks.
5. Get into teaching – Teaching is a hugely fulfilling and rewarding career but sometimes it is difficult to fully understand how to get into it. Therefore, the Eastern region Teaching Hubs are putting on a webinar to explain how you can get into this excellent profession. The webinar is on Thursday 7th December at 16:30. To register your interest, you please complete [this form](#).
6. Art competition – To raise money for her trip to Cambodia where her and her peers will be aiding local communities, Phoebe H in year 10 has launched an art competition for all pupils. Entrants must produce a piece of art relating to a culture of their choice. Any medium can be used with a £1 entry fee. There will be a prize for the best piece of work which will be a selection of art materials. Good luck!
7. Pupil achievements – We celebrated some seriously impressive pupil achievements through this communication last half-term. Don't forget, if you child/ren has/have achieved something impressive outside of the school gates, please let us know and we will make sure it is noted in this newsletter.

This completes the updates for this week. I would like to conclude my communications today by marking, our Secretary of the Old Newportonian Society, Keith Huddleston, who sadly passed away last month. Keith was

Secretary of the Society for over 50 years as well as a physics teacher and Head of Science at our school before this, for at least 42 years. He loved our school and was a force of positive energy, not only through his knowledge of our long history and traditions but, even more impressively, through his acceptance of change and our need to evolve. Yesterday, pupils from our school lined the road to remember Keith as the hearse passed our community on the way to church. Although sombre, it was a fitting demonstration of the exceptional impact that Keith has had. Keith was also a keen sportsman and, being a Yorkshireman, particularly liked his cricket. He organised the annual ONs/School cricket match at which, as one former pupil recalled, "Hudd was an annoyingly accurate spin bowler, who always got me out!" There have been so many tributes over the past few weeks from the ex-pupils he worked with and we hope that this provides Keith's family with some comfort, during this very difficult time; our thoughts are, of course, with them.

In the words of the William Butler Yeats, "Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire."

Have a great weekend,
Duncan Roberts

Principal