

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Season's Greetings

I hope you had an excellent week. This will be the final newsletter of this term and of 2023. As is the case with all final communications of the term, I try to make these as short as possible. Although we still have some time remaining of this term next week with lots of great things planned, this is our final Friday of the academic year. This week it has been a pleasure to meet with a range of pupils, giving them Principal's Commendations for their excellent achievements whether that be in the Christmas Card competition or Theatre Shoebox competition (more on this later). I will be issuing more commendations next week for two pupils in each year group who have demonstrated a particularly excellent attitude and impressive effort this term. Selected pupils will be invited to my office next week for hot chocolate. Other pleasing news to report this week includes the funds raised from our Parents' Association annual winter barbecue which took place two weeks ago. The profits raised were just shy of £2,000; the best ever result that we have had. This will go towards particular projects that our NPA will invest in to support our Academy. We will provide further details on this as the academic year progresses. Next week we will be raising funds for a range of charities; there are more details about this, below. The Academy also had its annual Christmas lunch today. Despite the canteen queue being at its largest (as it is every year) all the pupils seemed to really enjoy the experience and celebrate the festive cheer in the right way.

Further updates this week are as follows:

1. Anglian Learning parent survey - Thank you for participating in our parent and carer engagement survey. Through the survey, your voice has been heard and organised in such a way that your views will be considered in our future strategic plans and decisions. We will now commence the analysis phase to understand what the most important areas to be considered are, after which we will inform you of our conclusions and next steps. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Academy. Thank you again for your feedback.
2. Dates for the diary next half-term – A reminder that we have year 11 parents' evening on **Thursday 11th January** and years 12 and 13 parents' evening on **Thursday 8th February**. Further information, including the booking process, will be shared with you early next term.
3. Reminder of final day plans – A reminder that term ends on Wednesday 20th December at 13:20. There are some buses that will be arriving at that time. Other bus routes will be arriving at the usual time and we will publish these on our social media pages next week. If you need the Academy to supervise your child/ren between 13:20 and 15:15 please let their form tutor know so that we can make the necessary arrangements.
4. Uniform changes – It was great to meet some pupils this week to discuss our plans on uniform changes from September 2024. As always, whenever you speak with our pupils as part of a panel, they are so insightful and their ideas are creative; this was no different. We are now starting to translate these changes into policy and working with the supplier to help us implement these. In the new year, I will provide you with a more detailed summary of the proposed changes along with the details of the website for how orders can be made.
5. Christmas concert – Our Christmas concert will be taking place in school on Monday with Reverend Peter Allen from St Mary's Church Newport for key stage 3 pupils. Key stage 4 pupils will have other events and celebrations planned next week. It is also very pleasing to see how many pupils from all year groups are involved in the concert in some way, especially our many talented musicians.
6. Sixth Form Charities Week - Our Sixth Form students have been organising a few events for our community recently. They have been selling raffle tickets in form time all week with special prizes (including a McDonalds delivered by a Sixth Former) and there is a Christmas Cinema taking place with popcorn on sale. The charities that they will be raising funds for are MacMillan, Guide Dogs and Mind.
7. Christmas jumper day – On Tuesday 19th December we will be doing our annual Christmas jumper day, raising vital monies for charities associated with SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). Pupils will be required to wear uniform as normal but in exchange for their shirt, tie and jumper, they can wear a Christmas jumper. We will be collecting £1 during form time for those who take part.
8. Theatre shoe box competition – There have been some seriously impressive entrants to our theatre stage shoe box competition this year from our year 9 pupils. Impressive stages were designed by Jacob G, Isaac S,

Joel R, Freya T, Louise L and Robyn D. The top three stages were designed by Flo K who achieved third place, Zachary M who achieved second place and Isabella E who achieved first place. All three finalists received a Principal's Commendation. Well done to everyone who took part. The three finalists' stages are currently being displayed next to my office.

9. Pupil achievement – This week we celebrate the brilliant achievement of Hannah P in year 12 who is a cadet in the Saffron Walden St John Ambulance unit. A few weeks ago, Hannah entered the Essex district Cadet of the Year competition which involved a whole day of team building activities, drill, first aid scenarios, presentation on a subject of their choice and a panel interview. Hannah was chosen to be Essex Cadet of the Year for 2024. She was officially invested by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex earlier this month and will now accompany the Lord Lieutenant on some public duties during 2024. In addition, Hannah is automatically entered into the Regional and National Cadet of the Year competition which will be held in London early in the new year. Congratulations Hannah and good luck with the competition next year.

This concludes the brief updates this week. Thank you for all your support this term and indeed this calendar year. Colleagues have received some very thoughtful comments over the past few days and weeks from many of you. We greatly appreciate this and the support you give us. I have said on many occasions that it remains vitally important that schools and the parent body work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people who attend and we subscribe fully to this ethos. I hope that over the festive period, you get the chance to have a break yourself, close the laptop, and spend time with family and friends. I hope that our pupils also get the chance to do this, whilst reflecting upon all the many achievements, performances and excellent pieces of work that they have completed this term.

As the African proverb states, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Best wishes,

Duncan Roberts

Principal