

Newsletter May 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,



It has been a busy and exciting term. As I sit and write this letter it is **Science week** – with lots of activities for the different groups of pupils, ranging from the opportunity to touch and handle a python; frog; tarantula to special “hair raising” experiments. The chatter at lunch times has been infectious with all departments joining in with the fun (and learning) – thanks to Mrs Farrier and the Science team for organising the week.

The term saw our Year 6 residential at Kingswood Centre In Doncaster, an amazing three days with the group motto being “We can do IT!” (and yes they can). The majority of our main corridor Year 9 pupils have just returned from Grendon – a very exciting week, exhausting for staff and I suspect quite a lot of dirty clothes for parents. I visited on the Thursday



evening to join the pit fire session – I was so proud of their attitude and determination to join in activities, that sometimes they don't at first want to do!

The VIth Form took part in their residential at The Frontier Camp – I was sent a video of a member of staff and student on the high swing – not sure who was screaming loudest!



As always, a huge thanks to the staff teams involved in each residential – it is greatly appreciated both by myself and the pupils. Next term is our week long residential for some of our pupils within the Autism department at the Thomas Centre in Lincolnshire. Let's hope for good weather, as there are wonderful outside opportunities in the grounds I personally like the Go Carts.



During our **Celebrating Autism** week among many activities during the daytime we also had a talk from Robyn Steward – a personal perspective regarding her life with autism.

Other events included the Theatre Visit – “Little Princess” supported by Happy Days Charity – which we fundraise for; our Parent Arts “drop in” afternoon; Choir Performance at the Northampton Festival – once again, as I write this event is taking place (Good luck to all).



It is the final month of schooling for a number of our students. Whilst I know they are all looking forward to the next stage of their lives, I also know they will miss Billing Brook, as we will miss them. I have been delighted with their positive attitude and hard work. This week I visited some of them at an off site course Motor Vehicles; Construction and Hair and Beauty – I am so impressed with the progress they have made in these and other areas. There are a number of events and activities specifically for our leavers. If your child is involved with any of them you will receive separate letters, but please put in your diaries the Leavers Assembly on the 30th June 2017.



You will see that I have changed the month of our sports day – mainly because our leavers miss out (and complain) – this year our sports day is on Wednesday June 28th 2017 – Miss Howe and her team are organising the events and I know that she has booked the good weather. The sports day runs throughout the day – you will have more detail as to whether you should come am or pm.



We hope that many of you will be able to join us on our **Saturday July 1st 2017 1000 – 1400 (most people finished by 1200 last year)** event at Pitsford

Reservoir, which is a fundraising event for anyone to take part in – you can walk (with or without animals); jog; cycle around the reservoir and catch up with staff who are taking part. Mrs Avery is arranging the event for us and has sent out more information separately.



Our annual School Fayre arranged by Mrs Kennedy is on **Saturday July 8th 2017 1200 – 1400** – please put the date in your diary.

Next Term

Please check the attached calendar for all our events and look out for texts and letters. If in doubt contact the school office and they will let you know if your child is involved in anything “extra”.

New VIth Form Centre

At the end of my last newsletter, I excitedly announced the acquisition of a new 6th Form Centre. This is an off site provision which is just over 1/2 a mile from the main site. We have just appointed the builders, who for the next three months will be developing the site for us. The purpose of this centre is to develop vocational skills. Our focus is on future employability and life skills. There will be a coffee shop – waiter/tress service open to the public from October 2017 (we hope); a small “pre loved shop”; our courses will also include off site activities such as construction; hair and beauty; child care; functional literacy, numeracy and IT skills and work experience in the community. A local hairdressers has just “adopted” us and is going to be offering weekly work placements throughout the year. We have lots of other ideas – too many to mention at the moment, but we hope you will support our enterprise and most importantly it supports the future aspirations of our pupils.

Taking Children out of School

Our attendance rate in school this year has been the worst it has been for some years. Some parents have been receiving attendance letters, which we don’t want to issue, but we cannot ignore if attendance is falling. Of course I understand if there are medical issues or sad unexpected events in families – these things cannot be avoided. May I politely remind you that holidays in term time are against the law. I appreciate that every situation is individual and I take personal circumstances into account, when reading the requests. However, it is an expectation that every child should attend for a minimum of 96% each year – has your child been at school for 96%?



Parent Forum

You will recall that I invited parents to meet with me to discuss our car parking issues at the school. It was a good meeting, although we all found it difficult to find any real solutions, as most things have been tried. However these are the suggestions that the parent forum have put forward:

- Parents to park at The Costcutter car park behind the school and walk down the pathway;
- Pupils to exit from the back gate, rather than the front gate;
- Request to delay the buses coming down Penistone Road at peak times;
- Highways to consider yellow lines on one side of the road to stop “blocking”; and
- Request staggered times for school transport (if it doesn’t cost the school any money).

A little moan..... I don't often do this, but I was very concerned about what I saw



Earlier this week one of our parents was taken ill outside the school and we had to call for an ambulance (they are alright by the way), however, I was quite alarmed at how some parents parked to pick up their children. Parent cars blocked the road; drove far too fast in front of the school entrance and exit gates; opened doors onto the road for children to get in, instead of opening on the kerb side and some even drove off at speed, without checking. Despite our clear request not to enter the car park via the main gates, but to use the pedestrian gate and walk way – some parents/ friends are still walking through the vehicle gates – this is very dangerous and a poor example to set to all children. If you are using cycles, then please remember that children should be wearing helmets.

I fully appreciate how challenging pickups are, we are a large school with nowhere to build more car parking, and I know that the majority of parents are very careful, however, your children are safe inside the school waiting to be picked up I would rather you take a few minutes more and park safely, than have a serious possible fatal incident due to rushing. Thank You.

Parent Questionnaire

In this envelope we have a parent questionnaire which I would appreciate if you could return it to school signed. It would also be very useful if you could let us have your **email address** in order to send letters and information out to you. Our new website is planned for the Autumn Term and it will be at that point we will not be sending newsletters out anymore but publishing them on line. We are also hoping to start sending more information out via email,



Finally, I hope you all have a lovely May break.
School opens to children on Monday 5th June 2017

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher



**Diary Dates for the Summer Term
5th June 2016 – 21st July 2016**

June 7 th	2017	Wicksteed Park KS 3 selected groups
June 12 th	2017	The Thomas Centre ASD Residential
June 12 th -23 rd	2017	Work Experience for Yrs 11 & 12 Confirmation will be sent
June 21 st	2017	Time 2 Talk – Parent Session 10.00am – 12.00am
June 28 th	2017	Sports Day – Detailed information to follow
June 29 th	2017	Leavers Disco – 6.00pm – 8.00pm
June 30 th	2017	Last day for Leavers, including special assembly
July 3 rd	2017	Transition Programme starts – new classes until the end of term
July 1 st	2017	Saturday – join us for a cycle / walking / jogging fundraiser around Pitsford Reservoir
July 8 th	2017	Saturday – Summer Fayre, 12.00noon – 2.00pm
July 10 th -12 th	2017	Parent Consultation Evenings
July 17 th	2017	House Treat Day
July 18 th	2017	Awards Presentations
July 19 th	2017	Awards Presentations
July 20 th	2017	School Picnic, come and join us
July 21 st	2017	Last Day of Term
July 26 th -28 th	2017	Playscheme

Monday 4th September 2017 School Term Starts

