

Friday 15th September 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

Enrichment

Mr Boardman has asked me to pass on his praise and thanks to the 600+ students who have embraced our brand new enrichment programme, which takes place during period 5, four days each week. Seeing students



depart for all of the different classes is really exciting and Mr Boardman has been particularly impressed with how students have thrown themselves into brand new activities and experiences, often working with students from different year groups with previously unknown staff and doing, making, performing, designing, inventing, memorizing or competing in many different ways. Mr Boardman will provide a full insight into our first Enrichment Season in a few weeks' time and we look forward to sharing more images of our students in action.



Open Evening and the School Site



You will be aware that we tend to do some work on our school site during every summer holiday. Each year we add more in our goal to maintain our lovely school site and to add new features to make our buildings and classrooms more inspiring and beautiful. The rebuilding of West will be our most dramatic achievement for 75 years in that respect, but this summer we have refreshed many parts of the school.

The Bridge bring about the most obvious. However it's the Sports Hall that has been dramatically refurbished. We have replaced the Sports Hall floor – its first makeover since it was built in the late 1980s. The walls have been repainted in school blue and we've added some very large banners. Some with messages from our

Mission Statement but the one that is the most eye catching is our huge timeline of human history that spans the entire hall. It is beautiful and engaging in itself but is also designed to communicate messages about your children's place in the future, which is unknown and limitless.

We hope that you can drop in to take a look at some point or join us for the Open Evening this coming Thursday (21st September). Please remember that school closes at 2pm on that day and we welcome parents and carers from 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start.

HEADTEACHER
Mr Barry Doherty

www.colmers.bham.sch.uk

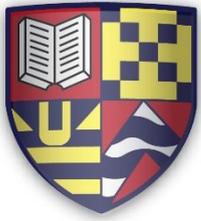
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Year 7s

Our excellent start to the new school year continues and we are all finding our feet with new rooming, classes, subjects, teachers and timings. It is surprising how quickly children adapt to change and this is particularly true of our brilliant new Year 7s. Praise for this year group is very high and it is their manners, hard work, sense of fun and potential that is mentioned most. They are also showing signs of making very rapid progress and have embraced life in secondary school and in The Bridge really well. *More on this from Mrs Wilks next week.*

Year 8s

In many ways our current Year 8s are the luckiest year of all. They will be a first and a last. The first to experience The Bridge curriculum and the last to experience the old fashioned curriculum we used to have in what was once called key stage three. It is of course four years until they sit their own GCSE examinations and they will begin to choose their GCSEs in a programme we commence just after Christmas. *More on this from Mrs Wilks(Head of Lower School) next week.*

Year 9s

Seeing Year 9 students in blazers and starting out on their GCSEs is also great to see and they have quickly understood that choosing so many of their subjects allows them the time to specialise on those subjects they enjoy the most. Having three years to cover the much more demanding GCSE examinations is also good news for those students and their teachers. Three year GCSEs are now commonplace across the country and many hope it will significantly reduce the pressure on students in that final year of their GCSEs. *Mr Morris (Head of Middle School) will share more about Middle School developments (Years 9, 10 and 11) in his newsletter in two week's time.*

Years 10 to 13

Fortunately the students in our most demanding years, Years 10 to 13, have got their heads down and shown a determination to take these next few years very seriously. At the start of term it is fairly easy for students to buy into the idea that the most successful students are those who get focused earlier than others. As the school weeks mount and tiredness or workload sets in, a great deal of resilience is required to maintain that determination. Be assured we shall be ready to pick them up when they flag but remind them that the best boost for energy and commitment is success and that remains very much in their control. *Mr Charlett (Head of Upper School) will also tell us more about sixth form developments in three weeks' time.*

Uniform and Appearance

This has been a real highlight this year with almost every student wearing the right uniform and adopting the right appearance. We thank you for your help and support in getting this right. Many more families have taken up our offer of support for providing uniform and I hope each family that has benefitted will agree we do so without a fuss and a genuine awareness that a little bit of help from us goes an awful long way with you.

It's hard to argue that a correctly worn tie will get you a better GCSE grade, but uniform is much more about expressing our commitment to our community and what we are all about. Uniform reminds us of our common goal and unity as a school and allows us to express our own unique identity through the things we say, write, draw, design and create - not the fashions we pick off a rail.

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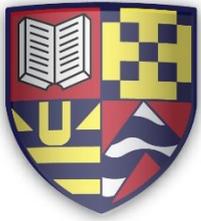
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Clothing usually expresses a clothing company's decision about what we wear, but your children's artwork, essays or performances are truly them. As I often say to students, I wouldn't ordinarily wear a shirt and a tie but I do so every day because it is my own uniform and one way I can show my own commitment to this community each day as well.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Are your children entitled to a free school meal?

At Colmers that entitlement saves you about £350 per year on school meals costs and can also lead to significantly reduced costs for other expenses like school equipment, school trips and visits and even bursaries in sixth form.

A number of parents and carers have made enquires about whether or not they are entitled and so I wish to remind you that if you want to find out more you can call 453 1778 and ask to speak to Mrs Fowke. She can, in full confidence, talk you through the eligibility criteria and help you apply within minutes.

Our biometric system means that children who are entitled to a free school meal are not known to others because their allowance appears on the computer each day. This avoids the system we may all remember from childhood when we had to queue in a special line for those tickets. Thankfully, much has changed from those days.

Thank you for reading and I hope you will catch next weeks' newsletter from Mrs Wilks, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Lower School.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Doherty,

Headteacher

