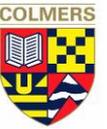


HEADTEACHER'S HALF-TERMLY NEWSLETTER



February 2012

Dear Parents and Carers,

Snow Patrol...

Thankfully, we appear to have been very lucky this year and avoided a snow closure. I can't ever remember a school being affected *after* the February half term but you never know. I am grateful to the site team who worked hard last Sunday and Monday morning to ensure that we could open safely this week and ensure we did not lose any curriculum time. Happiest of all were the Year 11s, whose internal examinations were completed without cancellations or postponements!

Sports College Update...Gold Partner Status

On Tuesday 17th January, the Youth Sports Trust visited Colmers to assess our application to become a Gold Partner School. An assessor had to make judgements on the schools' capacity to demonstrate dedication and outstanding practice in relation to PE and wider sports experiences. We were obviously delighted to be informed, the following day, of our success in gaining *Gold Partner Status*. This is testament not only to the work of the school and PE department, but also the close links we have with the local community, feeder schools and of course, the pupils and their parents and we continue to be very grateful for your support.

Farewell...

Later this term we wish two colleagues happiness and our best wishes as they begin maternity leave. Mrs Brooke and Mrs Fletcher will be leaving us shortly, but will be returning to us again later this year.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

- Our final INSET days will take place this week, Thursday 9th and Friday 10th February. School will be, therefore, closed to all students on these days.
- School formally closes for half term on Friday 10th February 2012, reopening on Monday 20th February.
- School closes for the Easter holidays on Friday 30th March, reopening for all students on Monday 16th April.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

Traditionally, the February half term heralds the start of Year 11 revision programmes for some students. By the Whitsun half term, every student will be immersed in the goal of being examination ready! Some students start their revision earlier than others and we know that they will be the most successful students in the exams.

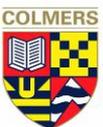
Whether you like the idea that the best way to eat an elephant is to do so in small chunks or the saying that "the longest journey begins with a single step", the best advice to students and parents is to break up all of the necessary revision into manageable chunks or 'steps'. The earlier the journey begins, the further the student will travel! Find out more advice for parents at:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/helping_with_exams/

Lucky 7 Tips for Revision:

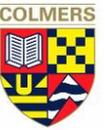
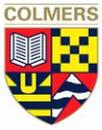
1. Work out a revision timetable for each subject
2. Break revision time into small chunks - hour-long sessions with short breaks at the end of each session often work well
3. Make sure your child has all the essential books and materials
4. Condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts
5. Buy new stationery, highlighters and pens to make revision more interesting
6. Go through school notes with your child or listen while they revise a topic
7. Time your child's attempts at practice papers

Source: BBC Learning



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE BY BELONGING TOGETHER & CHALLENGING MIND-SETS





BELONGING TOGETHER

E.A.T. Out at Colmers? This is an expression I will be using in my next assembly with students. The assembly uses a game to illustrate how simple it really is to work out the rules at school; from uniform to behaviour to making sure letters get home to parents! I felt it worth sharing the letters with you to consider their relevance at home as well...

The **'E'** stands for 'Expect'. It's all about what we 'expect' all students to be like when they are with us at school. Most of what we 'expect' is not written down in a long list of rules. As children mature, they ought to come to know what's expected. The **'A'** stands for 'Ask'. It is what we do, as staff, when a student has forgotten or ignored the expectations. We 'ask' a student to correct their behaviour or their choices. The **'T'** stands for 'Tell'. This describes the moment we must, as staff, 'tell' students how to correct their behaviour by issuing an instruction that will improve behaviour or dress, for example.

Sadly, when we have EATen our way through these stages, we must consider taking a student *out* of the situation; either with another colleague or, more seriously through a day of isolation or exclusion. In the coming months we shall be reminding students of these stages and working even more closely with parents when students choose to ignore each stage of **'E.A.T.'**. Once they have had an opportunity to *chew* over the assembly messages, please ask your children about my assembly and their thoughts on its meaning...

CHALLENGING MIND-SETS

In the 1980s the introduction of home computers and consoles like 'Astro Wars' began the development of gaming technology. In time, the X Box, PS3 and Wii will themselves look as outdated as my 'Munchman' console (see opposite).



Our student's children and grandchildren will probably be immersed in a parallel gaming world using virtual reality. 3D televisions will be stacked up in refuse centres; replaced by 4D or holographic televisions...

There are two main concerns schools have about excessive gaming:

- Firstly, for some students, their personal identity becomes interweaved or confused with their online identity.
- Secondly, and much more common, is that many, many young people are depriving themselves of much needed sleep to play on-line and pretend to be undercover spies, soldiers, racing drivers or aliens into the very early hours of the morning.

Mr Boardman is leading some research around this issue with our students and the results will appear in our next edition of *Fanfare*. In the meantime, it is worth noting how many hours per day or week your sons and daughters are 'gaming'. Indeed, how late are these games being played?

Clearly, these are issues about individual and family choices but some of the research and evidence is concerning. Please look out for our next edition of *Fanfare* and for more information go to:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Internetsafety/index.htm> (or)

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Childrensleep/Pages/howmuchsleep.aspx>

