



Headteacher's Update

23 May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well and are looking forward to the bank holiday weekend.

Cumulative Assessment Week 2

When we return the students will spend the week completing tests based on their learning across the year.

The students have been fully briefed on the week during an assembly and will be given further guidance on how the week will work when they return to school after the break on June 2nd. All the students have been given a briefing on revision timetables and how to revise which we know can be daunting for the students. Additionally, they have all been given a detailed breakdown of what to revise for each subject and practice exercises to complete.

We realise this week will present the students with a degree of challenge; however, we have changed the week in terms of organisation with longer lunchtimes (1 hour) and study periods as well as removing electives from the week.

We know that this week is different for the students, and we know this week will be a challenge for some of our cohort and we have briefed staff on how we support the students to manage their week. However, so many of our students have risen to the challenges we have put before the student's time after time and exceeded expectations. When I look back at the primary school transition notes I see references to behaviour concerns that have not materialised, I see many concerns raised regarding coping with workload where there are now none and I read of worries regarding independent working for students who done nothing but excel. I look forward to seeing what our wonderful students can achieve during this week.

Ms Moore

Ms Moore popped in on Wednesday complete with crutches, knee brace and a huge scar. It was great to see her but even more exciting for the students who surrounded her with smiles, questions, and cries "Miss Moore, we've missed you!"

Ms Moore will make a gradual return to work after the half-term, which is pleasing, although her first week back will be heavily involved with visits to primary schools regarding our new students starting in September.

Attendance

Thank you for your support with attendance. Attendance continues to sit at 95.2% for the year which is incredibly positive with less than 20 students classified as persistently absent. However, there are a few families where the attendance sits at below 90% without good reason where we have been advised by the local authority to implement an attendance contract and we will be in touch after the break regarding this matter.

Internal Review

On June 11th we will have four senior leaders in the Trust team who will come and do a detailed internal review of lessons and the student experience of River Academy.

We have visitors on a weekly basis who want to see the great practice going on in school, but this will be a more detailed analysis. I have asked the team to focus on the consistency of standards and the experience of the school for all learners whatever their ability levels. Additionally, we will be following up the student survey with some panel questions to tease out how the students perceive the school.

Litter

I took 14 of our students armed with litter sticks out onto Richfield Avenue on Monday morning. Whilst there is no litter on the school site, we wanted to do our bit for the community and freshen up the grass verges on the way into school.

The students tackled the task with real gusto and brought back two bags of discarded plastic and paper. Whilst they lived that River value of community and as you see from the photo, they had some fun at the same time.

Maths Challenge and Celebration Assembly

I mentioned our fantastic Maths Challenge results last week which we were rightly proud of. However, I wrote this prior to Friday afternoon's Celebration Assembly.

When the awards were given out (over 40 of them!) there was a real sense of joy in the hall. And when Alyssa's 'Gold' and 'Best in School' was read out there such a wonderful communal outpouring of recognition of this achievement.

This 'cool to achieve' ethos does not exist in all secondary schools and a visitor who was in the hall on Friday remarked on how blown away she was by the students and their sheer joy at doing well and celebrating each other's achievements. Long may it continue!!



A special mention also goes to my Headteacher award winners Alman and Tiayana. Both students have shown a really positive improvement in their merits, attitude and attainment over recent weeks

and it has great to see them flourish at our school.



Travellers

As many of you will know, the land just beyond the foot of our field was occupied by a small group of travellers last Tuesday evening (13th May). This involved a lot of work with the Trust, police, local authority and other local stakeholders on how to move this situation forwards.

Following a piece of risk assessment with the Trust and the council, we decided to take PE activities off the field whilst the travellers occupied the site. However, following a lot of work in the background, a Section 60 notice was served on the encampment on Thursday evening (15th May). All travellers were offsite by 10am last Friday and the site was cleared by the Council and police which meant outdoor PE activities resumed from Monday.

There's never a dull moment in the life of a school!!!!

Have an amazing half term and thank you for all your support.

Take care and best wishes

Andy Hartley

Headteacher