



RIVER ACADEMY

Issue 4

Headteachers' Update

27th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of Week 3.5 the students and the timetable are really starting to embed. The students seem much more confident at plotting their way across the day and around the site and we haven't had any lost souls for a few days.

Visitors

We have had a large number of visitors this week, with school tours for Year 6 parents, the School Business Managers from the Trust, our Director of Education and the Chair of the governing body. It has been a pleasure to let our visitors see our smart attentive students as they work hard in the classroom environment. Indeed, we are really starting to see some high-level thinking from our students with great knowledge recall. Do take the time to ask your son or daughter about their view on Mr Hyde as an internal or external monster, their view on the big bang theory versus the bible story or test them on their knowledge of cells and cell specialisation. It is awe inspiring to see just how much our students have absorbed in such a short space of time.

Parent Welcome Evening

Thank you to so many of you for coming to our Parent evening on Tuesday. I counted around 240 of you in the hall. I hope you all enjoyed the speeches and the tour and the school has come to life following your visit. Thank you also for so many of you allowing your sons and daughters to help at Open Evening next Wednesday. It is our opportunity "Wow" the next cohort of students and families and there are no better ambassadors than our smart and positive students and this event is the time to show it.

We have attached a pdf of the slides for those parents who could not make it on the evening.

Please also be reminded that we will close early next Wednesday (at 1.30pm) in order for staff to prepare for Open Evening.

Homework

Thank you for all of your support in logging students onto the Student Portal. This will be an invaluable tool in ensuring that our students take responsibility and gain independence in their school experience. If your child doesn't have a mobile phone, they can use a desktop / laptop to access the portal via the internet. If students are having trouble logging in, please let us know via School Reception.

An update in terms of Home Learning: as we get to grips with our Bromcom system, we have realised we have an issue with parents being alerted to incomplete/missing homework. Please ignore this for the moment. We are working on this issue.

Additionally, we have been overwhelmed with the effort and commitment students have put into their Home Learning - in the last 2 weeks alone students have completed an additional 330+ hours of Sparx Maths **ON TOP** of their set homework. This is just phenomenal and truly demonstrates the drive for improvement that our students have.

To remind you, if Home Learning is not completed and handed in on time then students will receive a demerit which will show up on the MCAS app. We will monitor these demerits and put in interventions as necessary. We will not let our students fall behind.

SAB and PTA

We will be looking for two parent members of our School Advisory Board, known as the SAB, very soon. This is the Maiden Erlegh Trust version of governance. You will be supporting the trust in holding me to account for the progress of the school. The role is a strategic one which does deal with individual issues but one that

looks at the overall progress of the students, the staff and the reputation of the school. You will join an esteemed panel of members including a secondary headteacher, a Director of Science from a local independent school, the Director of AI for a global investment bank, a very experienced chair and an employee of a wealth management company. It says much about the reputation of the Trust that such an experienced and strong team has been assembled.

In addition, we will be looking for a fundraising team to work on the PTA. I am hoping we may be able to negotiate a stall at the Festival for example, along with organising parent events and supporting things such as a planned Sponsored Walk in the summer term.

Star of the Week

My student star of the week this week is **Hayden** who demonstrated great community spirit and empathy skills on Wednesday when she realised I hadn't had my lunch and made sure I got some cutlery so I could eat my lovely school dinner after the students had gone into lessons. These good manners are supported by the Trust School Business Managers remarking how fantastic it was to be greeted with a cheery "Good Morning" by the students when they arrived for a meeting at River early on Thursday morning.

Lastly, I just want to finish by saying what a pleasure it is to work with your sons and daughters. They are trying so hard to get it right, they are pushing themselves to achieve great things in each and every lesson and they act in such a caring and positive manner toward each other and my staff. They are doing themselves proud!

Have a great weekend

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a light grey or blue ink and includes a small flourish at the end.

Andy Hartley
Headteacher