

29th September 2023

Dear Parents / Carers

Yesterday evening we hosted our annual Open Evening and it was great to welcome over 650 visitors from our local community. Additionally, we had over 80 students as ambassadors for our school and they were described by our visitors as “exceptional leaders”.

We are now one month into the new term and there have been many positives - thank you for your continued support. We have seen so many of our students committed and dedicated to modelling our Kingsdown BEATs each and every day.

- Daily average attendance - year to date - 94.2%
- Persistent absence rate [<90%] - the lowest it has been in the last 4 years
- Achievement points awarded - 12,392
- Yr 11 attitudes - learning walks have consistently committed on very high levels of engagement and these students working really hard
- Parent Information Evenings - average attendance has been 91% - thank you all
- MCAS - 87% of our parents are now using this important app

Thank you for taking the time to read and share the key messages from this week’s parent newsletter.

Absence and COVID

If your child tests positive for COVID the guidance is that they should try to stay at home and avoid contact for 3 days after the test is taken. Please do let the Attendance Officer know if your child has tested positive.

ILS - Independent Learning Suite

The ILS supports the learning of students when their timetabled teacher is absent from school. All lessons are led by Mr Voss and Mrs Blake, two highly experienced and skilled colleagues. Some of these lessons will take place in the normal classroom. When there are a number of classes that need cover students will have these lessons in the ILS. The ILS is a room set up very much like an exam hall and students are expected to work in silence. The work set by teachers is designed to review prior learning and prepare students for future learning. The work set is designed so it can be completed by students independently, and support is available if needed. Provision is made to meet any additional needs students may have. Please remind your child that they should come to school every day with a fully charged Chromebook to support their learning in lessons.



RESPECT the ILS

R	Respect others' working Line up quietly ready to enter the room ready to work
E	Enter the room quietly Follow instructions of where to sit- register order with your class
S	Stay in your seats Raise your hand if you need help and do not wander the room
P	Prepare for what you need A fully charged chromebook, earphones, pens / pencils and a reading book.
E	Ensure you respect the room Do not graffiti, damage the tables, leave the room ready for the next student.
C	Check your work and move on If finished use the online platforms or read a book to develop your knowledge
T	Try your best with the work Have a go at the work set but make sure you ask for help if you still don't understand

 **KINGSDOWN
SCHOOL**

Home Learning

All students complete home learning throughout their time at Kingsdown. This embeds good habits of study, but most importantly, there is a direct correlation between home learning completion and GCSE outcomes. From year 7, students are set 20 minutes of each core subject and Languages every week and fortnightly for Humanities. Other subjects are set fortnightly from Term 2. Students in year 8 will receive 30 minutes of all subjects weekly and year 9 will receive 45 minutes. KS4 students will receive an hour per week of each of their subjects. This home learning will prepare students for their assessments and embed important knowledge in the long term memory. Thank you for checking your child has completed their home learning each week so they can be rewarded for this in lessons as well as successful in their assessments.

Learning Lounge

Our Learning Lounge is available to all students **Monday to Thursday 3pm-4pm** in our Library. We provide a calm and focussed environment with support from staff to help your child complete their home learning. Please do encourage your child to attend if they need further help with their home learning or just require a quiet place in school to complete the work before heading home.

Yr 8 Curriculum information evening - outline

Year 8 Curriculum Information Evening is taking place next week on Thursday 5th October. The evening will share teaching methods, curriculum content and approaches to assessment across Key Stage 3 (Year 7, 8 & 9) with parents and carers. We will discuss our routines, expectations, homework completion, and show you resources that you can use to support learning at home. We are also looking forward to sharing with you the wide range of student extra-curriculum and enrichment opportunities for your child here at Kingsdown. It is also a chance for you to ask any questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you there.

Student Experience - opportunities this term for your child

There are a number of opportunities for your child to be involved this term:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunchtime	Sparx maths support (7-11) Board and card games (7-11)	Sparx maths support (7-11) Board and card games (7-11)	Sparx maths support (7-11) Board and card games (7-11)	Sparx maths support (7-11) Board and card games (7-11)	Sparx maths support (7-11) Board and card games (7-11)
After school		Boys football (7-11) Girls Football (7-11) Year 8 boys rugby	Year 7 boys rugby Year 9/10 boys rugby Netball (7-11)	Fitness club (10/11) Choir	

There are a number of student leadership opportunities students can sign up for. These will be programmes that run throughout the year to develop key skills. If your child is interested and not yet signed up please tell them to follow the link in their emails or contact the teacher running the group.

Year 7 - Aspiring leaders- preparing to be transition ambassadors - **Mrs Strett**

Year 8 - Sports leaders - preparing to deliver sports to younger students - **Mr Shepherd**

Year 9 - Becoming leaders - preparing to become prefects and peer educators - **Mrs Strett**

Year 10 - Senior leaders - preparing to become head and senior students - **Mrs Strett**

Years 9/10/11 can also put themselves forward to be peer educators this term they will be delivering on to all students. Rights Respecting Education.

Please also see the student experience booklet on our parent portal with further information about the enrichment offers that will come throughout the year.

Year 11 support / interventions

This week, some of our Year 11 students started targeted intervention sessions for core subjects during tutor time. Other subjects will be running intervention sessions after school and parents will be informed when these begin. All intervention sessions are for specifically targeted students at this point and we will run some more general 'revision' sessions later in the year. If your child has been invited to intervention, please encourage them to attend.

Internal Truancy

Over the past few years our students who had an attendance record of over 95% went on to achieve one grade higher per subject in their GCSEs. As we keep reinforcing to our students "attendance really, really does matter".

One of our challenges in the post pandemic era is to remove internal truancy and ensure that each and every child attends every single lesson. Thank you for reinforcing the attendance message with your child and in particular the importance of being on time. All our lessons start with DNA's - Do Now Activities - which are key to supporting our children to remember more and for longer.

This morning we held an end of September whole school on-line assembly. Here the students heard about the positive start to this new academic year and were congratulated for modelling our Kingsdown BEATs. Our students also heard about our whole school approach to truancy which will come into effect from Monday 2nd October. If a student is internally truanting they will be given a direct instruction to immediately go to their lesson. If they refuse to follow this direct instruction then this will be seen as defiance towards a member of staff and the behaviour for learning policy will be used which will result in that child being immediately suspended and parents called to the school to collect their child.

The clarity of this message has been shared with all children today and I am extremely optimistic that the need for this sanction will be very limited. Can I please ask for your support in ensuring that you reinforce the message that your child must be in lessons, on time and not internally truanting - every lesson really, really does count. Thank you for continuing to track your child's attendance on MCAS.

Attendance

As you can see from the graph below Year 7 continues to be the strongest year group with an attendance of 96.2%. Well done Year 7. We appreciate we have come to the time of year when colds and coughs are rife but please do refer to the Government's advice regarding [Is my child too ill for school](#)



Toilets at KDS

Up-date on refurbishments - Over the Summer holidays, 2 of the remaining 3 sets of toilets were fully refurbished (3 were fully refurbished the previous Summer). The boys' toilets saw the removal of the urinals and made the cubicles floor to ceiling to ensure privacy.

Toilets during lesson time - All toilets are open throughout the day. During lesson time, students are directed to their closest set of toilets. We do encourage our students to use the toilets during lesson changeover and at break and lunchtime since this keeps disruptions during lessons to a minimum.

Toilets at break and lunchtime - The toilets continue to operate in zone usage during break and lunchtimes. During break and lunchtimes there are duty members of staff monitoring the toilets at all times.

Can I please ask you to reinforce the importance to children about taking great care and pride in our school environment. Over the Summer we have again invested a significant amount of money into further enhancing our facilities which did include toilet blocks.

We need your help - last year we saw a significant increase in vandalism. This is terribly costly to put right. We know that it is only ever a very, very small minority who make such anti-social choices. We would really appreciate it if you could talk with your child and remind them that if they notice any behaviour that is not 'ok' in these social areas, they are encouraged to speak with a duty member of staff, and report what they have seen either using SHARPS via our school website. Thank you for reinforcing this important social behaviour message with your child.

Key dates for the rest of this term

Wed 3rd Oct	: Yr 7 Halloween Quiz - 4-5pm - Main Hall
Wed 4th Oct	: TD Day school closed for students
Thurs 5th Oct	: Year 8 Curriculum Information Evening 6.00 - 7.00pm
Tues 10th Oct	: Flu Immunisations for all year groups - please consent asap if you wish your child to be vaccinated. The link is on Bromcom.
Thurs 12th - Sat 14th Oct	: Year 11 Geography Trip to Cornwall - departing at 8am
Thurs 12th Oct	: Prize Evening 6.00pm - invites shared with parents
Weds 18th Oct	: End of Term; students finish at 3.00pm
Thurs 19th - Fri 27th Oct	: Half-term break
Mon 30th Oct	: Start of term 2 - 8.30am

With thanks for your continued support and for sharing these messages with your child / children.

Mrs Leigh-Bennett