

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021



## Headteachers' Blog

### Welcome Back

Welcome back to school – I am sure that after a long summer you are delighted to be sending your cherubs back to school! Well, much as we here at Stowmarket love our holidays, we are also excited to see the students back for what we hope is a full, uninterrupted year of learning, socialising, fun and laughter.

I am particularly keen to get going this year because I want to build on our success. We are not complacent here and our recent improvements can easily be lost if don't continue to push, evolve and build.

First, let's start by looking back over the summer.

### Results

For the second year in a row students did not sit formal examinations, rather they undertook assessment after assessment as staff fought to assemble the evidence that justified the grades that were submitted by the school to the examination boards. This was an exhausting process, but I am delighted to report that due to our diligent application of moderation and quality control, not a single GCSE or A level grade was changed. All of our A Level students achieved the grades they need to go onto their next stage of education, and our GCSE grades were extremely positive. We have not made a big fuss about publicising the exact grades, just as we didn't last year, because to set them against past performance achieved through quite different circumstances would be misleading. Equally, having always worked in more challenging environments, I found the whole business of trying to justify grades that on paper look considerably less than those achieved by more affluent state and private schools really unhelpful. So for a couple of years we have not made a big fuss beyond applauding the individual students who have all done so well, and privately patting the staff on the back for all their exceptional efforts.

So to summarise, we were very proud of our students and they performed extremely well.

### Summer School

I was delighted that we could offer a range of activities this year, with the support of government funding. We had Dance East in to run a week long school of dance, a number of different sporting opportunities, links to the John Peel Centre, a carving workshop in support of the Elfin Oak project on Chilton Leys and catch up tutoring for numbers of students as part of our partnership with Community Schools.

Unfortunately, our advertised Drama school was not able to run however I hope that our partnership with High Tide Theatre Company will continue and that further opportunities for those that love to perform will be offered during the year.

## Prom

This was hastily arranged but magnificently executed by Mrs Dolby. Held at school, the students looked fabulous and had a great time. Mr Furlong stunned us all with his dancing!



## Covid Testing

The requirement to test students twice as they return from summer holidays has not been easy. Despite many requests we have found it very difficult to find the adult numbers we need, however we are getting there, and look forward to closing this particular additional facility down by the end of the week. I have been delighted at how mature the students have been throughout this process.

## Standards

As we return to school, we are focussing hard on getting school back to as normal as possible, with one feature of that being our uniform. Although we are going to have a couple of warm days the rule is that students should be wearing their blazer in the building, as they move about, but with the teacher's permission they can be removed in class.

Alongside our new 'On site – Out of Site' mobile phone policy, we are emphasising the 3P mantra of Be Punctual, Be Prepared and Be Productive. This code is something that students will be able to see produces results, and that they can take with them into further education and employment.

## **Our key strategic work this year focuses on the following;**

**Stick of Rock** – principles and values captured a particular whole school model, that will lead to a more successful, and healthy school, with our most disadvantaged key.

**Curriculum** – adding depth and joy to our curriculum, particularly through an enhanced extra-curricular offer. UNIFROG – an incredibly powerful piece of software that supports the well established focus on employability and Futures.

**Teaching and Learning** – building on our traditional foci, with 'Make it Stick' and retrieval practice essential. Also, Mrs Arnold is going to lead the transformation of our literacy and reading programme.

**Behaviours and Attitudes** - Mobile phones, Be Punctual, Prepared and Productive

**Leadership and Management** – digital transformation, the development of subject leads as drivers of curriculum change, pastoral work our key partner The Mix.

**Personal Development** – The continuation of our recent drive to broaden our range of personal development opportunities, student leadership, mental health, Character, Rewards.

By no means are these the only areas we are working on, but they capture in a simplified form the direction of travel.

## **Soccer Aid**

I mentioned above the desire to bring 'joy' back to our curriculum after the pandemic stripped schools of sports teams, theatrical performances, choirs and bands, to name but a few. So I am delighted that Miss Howland with the support of Mr Wise and Sir John Leman High School, drove Year 11 PE students to Soccer Aid in Manchester this weekend, where I understand they had a brilliant weekend. The students were impeccably behaved and were outstanding ambassadors for us and for their families.





## **New Staff**

We have a few new colleagues at Stow – we welcome them all;

Mrs Goss – DAS and SE Officer

Miss Fitch – English

Miss Rea - Drama

Mr Dzregha – Maths

Mrs Jenner-Ludbrooke – Science

We also welcome Mr Norman and Mr Morgan who start their teacher training schemes in PE and Music respectively.

Here is to an uninterrupted, productive and joyful year!

Mr Lee-Allan



## Free School Meal Information

We have received several queries from parents asking how Free School Meals work using our canteen system. Therefore, I hope the following information will help you:

Students have £2.30 a day to spend on their lunch and will have a free drink of milk, if you would like your child to be able to have a morning snack you will need to add funds to their Parent Pay account. Year 7 Parents you will have received a letter from us in July with your log in details, if you have any questions about this please email [finance@stowhigh.com](mailto:finance@stowhigh.com) If your child does not use all of the £2.30 in one day it **will not** be carried forward.

Free school meal students are also entitled to a free breakfast in Lilies before school.



A poster for 'Breakfast BISTRO @ Lilies' with a dark blue background and a colorful striped border at the top. The title 'Breakfast BISTRO' is in large, bold letters, with '@ Lilies' in a script font and a coffee cup icon. Below the title, it says 'Open to all students and staff from Monday 12th April'. A red starburst graphic contains the price 'ONLY £1.50'. The word 'MENU' is in a red box. The menu items are listed in white boxes, and the opening hours 'Open 8.00am - 8.50am' are also displayed.

**Breakfast BISTRO @ Lilies**

Open to all students and staff from Monday 12th April

**MENU**

Open 8.00am - 8.50am

**ONLY £1.50**

2 slices Toast with 1x jam and 1x butter small fruit juice	2 slices Toast with 1x jam 1x butter piece fresh fruit		
2 slices of toast 1x jam 1x butter and a small yoghurt	Porridge pot and small juice	Porridge pot and fresh fruit	Bacon/sausage half baguette with piece of fresh fruit
Bacon/sausage half baguette and fruit juice	2 slices toast and butter with a tea/coffee	Small tea/coffee 2 slices of toast and butter or jam	Small tea/coffee fresh fruit and a yoghurt

If you are a free school meal or pupil premium student then all options are free.

**All School Photos Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September**



**IMPORTANT – REGISTER TO VIEW SCHOOL PHOTOS**

Carmel Jane Photography will be visiting our school on 10th of September 2021, to take the school's individual Photos.

All Parents are requested to pre-register before the photography date above to enable access to your child's photographs. Pre-registration is required for every photo shoot.

Registration only takes a minute. Please visit [www.carmeljaneshop.co.uk](http://www.carmeljaneshop.co.uk)

**and enter the following code:**

**JRVA6VG**

You will then be asked to pre-register with your **child's full name and form class.**

Once registered, as soon as the photos are available you will receive an automatic email notification to inform you that your child's photos are now ready to be viewed and can be purchased.

Don't miss out pre-register today!

**Dobbies Garden Competition**

The school's garden has been shortlisted in the Helping Your Community Grow competition. Please spare a few minutes to vote for us!

Dobbies are now inviting the public to vote (one vote per email address), using the link below, and selecting the Bury St Edmunds branch:

<https://www.dobbies.com/helping-your-community-grow>



10<sup>th</sup> September – All School Photos

30<sup>th</sup> September – Careers Event – Further information to follow

7<sup>th</sup> October – Year 7 Tripod Evening

8<sup>th</sup> October – PD Day



**Useful Contact Information:**

Head of Year 7	Mrs T Goodman	<a href="mailto:t.goodman@stowhigh.com">t.goodman@stowhigh.com</a>
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Assistant HOY 8 & 9	Mrs A Coole	<a href="mailto:a.coole@stowhigh.com">a.coole@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 9	Mr M Blewitt	<a href="mailto:m.blewitt@stowhigh.com">m.blewitt@stowhigh.com</a>
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To report a student absence please call **01449 613541** and select option: 1