

Monday 24th January to Friday 28th January 2022



Headteachers' Blog

Pre and Public Examinations

Year 10 students worked through their 'Walking Talking Mocks' in preparation for their Pre examinations that started and run through this week. We have been delighted with the focus they have shown and the serious way they have engaged with these important processes. Learning how to perform well in examinations is a crucial skill, and whilst I have always bemoaned the examination system's adherence to a Victorian model and argued for a system better suited to the modern work environment, I recognise that performing well with the system as it is improves life chances.

I think the chances of Year 11's sitting examinations in the summer increases every day. To that end we are offering a wide variety of support processes to give our students every chance of success. We are running Success sessions after school, we have special tutor groups formed for students in English and maths, we are supported by the one-to-one tuition service based at the Leisure Centre called Community Schools. Subjects are running revision and catch-up sessions and we have a mentoring programme underway for key groups of students. We will also run 'Walking Talking Mocks' and of course more Pre examinations. In assemblies we are providing revision strategy advice, and this week Mr Rourke is hosting an important GCSE preparation evening – how to help your son and daughter prepare for the examinations. It really is a most comprehensive plan. Mr West went to London to attend a meeting at which hundreds of other school leaders listened to the most up to date advice from leading professionals and he was immensely proud to hear that almost every tip they gave we are already doing.

None of this works without sustained hard work, supported by good rest and relaxation. These are habits that can be formed far lower down in the school. The stronger the foundation the higher one can go.

And now for something completely different....

Many parents must get 'right cheesed off' when their bairns come home from school covered in mud. This has been a challenge ever since the school opened its new facilities. I want to communicate to you how annoyed our exterior provision make me too. I lose sleep bemoaning the deal we have been given and spend much time and energy on trying to better our landscape. To this end I recently wrote to the Department for Education to ask them to reconsider their refusal to broaden our paths and provide more hard standing areas. I received their response last week. Guess what?

They tell me Stowmarket has more hard standing space than a school our size should have.

I have invited those that wrote to me to come and view the site, to answer your emails and to witness the appalling state the building gets into when students come in off a damp field, but so far, they have declined. It is a very unfunny joke.

Unsurprised I battle on. I do not know the answer, but I continue to explore every route I can to improve our external provision.

On the Topic of Politics

Year Nine students benefitted from talking to ex-student Harry Cobbold about his work as an assistant to Jo Churchill MP last week. What a fascinating time to hear from someone walking the corridors of power! Thank you to Harry for sparing us the time.

Be Prepared

We are seeing an increasing number of students arrive at school without the most basic of equipment. Pens, pencils, rulers, calculators, pe kit – it is a worrying trend. The complexities of modern schooling can leave some parents feeling at a loss to know how to support their child because the techniques used have changed so much, or the texts followed are different to those previously studied. A simple but great support is to ensure that the night before school, or the morning before they leave a simple equipment check is undertaken. To those that already do this – my thanks – it does make a difference. If a teacher cannot get a task moving quickly at the start of a lesson because they are trying to source pens for numbers of students, the impact can be dramatic.

For those who are in a real financial pickle, just let me know and we can help.

Wellbeing

Recently I read a wellbeing post about a book called 'The Joy of Small Things' by Hannah Jane Parkinson. Trivial things can make a difference to your day – for example,

The perfect dressing gowns

The all-day breakfast

Pockets (particularly on dresses!)

The first cup of tea in the morning

A fit of giggles

Closing browser tabs

Baths

A really funny meme

Perfect pens

A Sunday roast

Clean bedding

An open fire

A handwritten letter

I must emphasise that this is Hannah's list, not mine. However, it can be amazingly easy at school to be subsumed by all the things that are wrong – poor behaviour, lateness, heating, litter, recruitment, funding, pavements. I could go on. Even just writing this list lowers my mood. So, I have been making an explicit effort to focus on the small joys – the students that say 'Hello Sir' in the corridor, the laughter from a classroom, the bird that sings to me as I leave at the end of the day.

I also encourage those around me to do the same – focus on the positives. So go on, write your list, it can make a surprising difference.

Still looking for volunteers for FOSH or Parent Voice!

Enough of the nagging, have a lovely week, and thank you for your support.

Mr Lee-Allan

On Thursday fourteen pupils from Year 9 had the opportunity to meet virtually with two members of the Parliament Education and Engagement Team to get an insight into the workings of Parliament. They were given a variety of information ranging from who sits where in the House of Commons to the fact that there are no formal qualifications needed to be an MP. In fact, John Major, former Prime Minister did not have a degree, nor did he go to university. Although our local MP Jo Churchill was unable to attend, pupils spoke with one of her political advisors, Harry Cobbold, and were delighted to discover that Harry himself had been a pupil at Stowmarket High School. The pupils were a credit to the school offering excellent answers to questions posed.



School Uniform

We are pleased to be able to offer parents the opportunity to purchase some items of school uniform from Mrs Goodman, Head of Year 7. The items we have in stock at the moment listed below have been added to ParentPay to enable you to pay for them. Once you have paid for the items, please ask your child to go to Mrs Goodman in her office to collect.

Boys Black Blazer with Embroidered Pocket 30"	£26.50
Boys Black Blazer with Embroidered Pocket 32"	£26.50
Girls Black Blazer with Embroidered Pocket 32"	£26.50
Girls Black Blazer with Embroidered Pocket 34"	£26.50
Stowmarket High School Sports Socks 1 - 5	£4.15
Stowmarket High School Sports Socks 6 - 12	£4.35
Stowmarket High PE Polo Shirt + Emb. 30/32	£10.60
Stowmarket High PE Polo Shirt + Emb. 34/36	£10.60
STOW -16 Black/Teal/Gold Clip-on Tie 16"	£5
STOW-18 Black/Teal/Gold Clip-on Tie 18"	£5



Food and Nutrition

Last week in their lesson with Ms Romero the year 9 students were cooking a variety of rice dishes as pictured below.



Dates for your Calendar

Thursday 3rd February – Yr. 7 Frankenstein – Theatre Trip, B.S.E.

Thursday 10th February – GCSE Options Evening – Details to follow shortly

Monday 14th February – Yr. 11 Pre's Start

Friday 18th February – Non-uniform Day

Monday 21st February – Half Term



Useful Contact Information:

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To report a student absence for any reason, **including positive Covid test results** - please call **01449 613541** and select option: 1