

08 November 2019

Newsletter 10

Dear Parents/Carers

## Wootton Academy Trust News

### Be More Chill

Three performances of the musical, Be More Chill played to packed houses in the Wootton Upper School Theatre this week. On Thursday night there was a fully deserved standing ovation from the appreciative audience at the end of the performance. The show was quite simply ... stunningly good. A large cast of forty-nine students performed on stage or in the band. Lots of other were involved as stage managers, front of house, lighting, set construction and much, much more. You still have a chance to see the show, but it will mean a flight to Bremen to see it the week after next! A major production such as this only comes together as a result of hours and hours of rehearsal at the end of the day, at weekends and during the half term holiday.

The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Meryl Dolling, was our guest of honour at the last night; she commended the performers and other students on the excellent performance and told them how the skills they have learned will serve them well in the future.



The Trust would like to thank all students and staff who gave up so much time and put in so much hard work. Executive Principal, Mr Gleeson, said *"watching a performance of a Wootton Academy Trust show is humbling. One feels as if one is standing on the shoulders of giants watching our incredible students perform. The staff who work on our productions are some of the very best there are; all of us should reflect how lucky our students are to be inspired by such amazing colleagues."* The cheers that greeted the staff as they came onto stage at the end of the production to acknowledge the audience's appreciation demonstrates the appreciation and esteem they are held in by parents and students alike.

Everybody is already looking forward to the next production. Special thanks go to three key staff:

- Miss J. Robinson, Director
- Mrs M. Gaishauser, Choreographer
- Mr T. Hooper, Musical Director

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST



## Something is buzzing in the Music Department

The Music Department is really proud to announce that it now has several weekly ensembles available to all Trust students. Please do come along and see what's on offer. Better still, if you think this is something you would like to participate in, but do not yet have an instrument to play, then why not start learning? We have an array of instrumental specialists from flute to cello, guitar to clarinet, trombone to piano and much, much more! Come along and get involved.

Day	Guidance	Lunch	After School
Monday	Year 9 Choir	GCSE Music Composition	Sixth Form Choir (Kimberley College)
Tuesday		String Group	Main Choir & Soul Band
Wednesday		Grade V Theory	
Thursday	Wind Band	Rock Group	

## Bad Weather Procedure

In the event of Wootton Upper School or Kimberley College not being able to open due to bad weather, normally due to heavy snow, we put messages on the Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College websites. We also send an email and text to parents/carers – however, these always seem to take a long time to reach recipients. Last year we avoided snow and we hope the same will be the case this year. If our school and college cannot open, pupils and students will be set work on *Show My Homework*.

Any decision we take in respect of being open or closed has the safety of children at its heart. We are very aware that Kimberley College has a large number of young drivers who will not have experience of driving in icy conditions on untreated rural roads. We will ensure that our Pastoral Tutors include advice in their tutor sessions over the next few weeks, on driving safely, allowing more time, leaving more space between themselves and the vehicle in front of them. We hope that you too will want to go over this advice with your own children.

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

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Similarly, if you have a son/daughter who travels to college or school by bicycle, please remind them to wear bright clothing and ensure their bicycles are fitted with suitable lights.

## NUT FREE SITES

We would like to remind our students, parents/carers and staff that we operate nut free sites. We need everybody to respect this rule to keep members of our communities with nut allergies safe. Thank you for your co-operation.

## Open Evening for Year 12 September 2020 on Wednesday 13 November 5:00 - 8:00pm

Over 750 students have already registered to attend the College Open Evening next Wednesday. If you and your child have not already pre-registered for the event please visit the Kimberley College website for more information.

## Training Days - 28 November and 29 November 2019

Reminder Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College are closed to students on Thursday 28 November and Friday 29 November for staff training.

## News from a Former Pupil

We always like to receive news, letters and emails from former pupils. This week we received news from Livvy who left Wootton Upper School in July 2018. We thought you would like to read it.

*"My name is Livvy, Olivia when I am in trouble!*

*I am 18 years old and I was diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, JIA, at the age of 5. JIA affects 1 in 1,000 children in the UK and most people don't know that it is a chronic condition that children can get. Idiopathic means 'cause unknown,' so nobody knows why this condition chose me.*

*Most children grow out of it by the age of 11; unfortunately, I did not. I have arthritis in my left ankle, knee and elbow, I also suffer with Bakers Cysts in these joints. I was a pupil at Wootton Upper School where I had the most amazing support from teachers (I won't name them), the Attendance and SEND teams. I flared throughout Year 10 and 11; my GCSE's were difficult. However, with everyone's support I gained 7 GCSE's at grade 4 and above.*

*I am now studying for a triple BTEC in Sport and Activity Development at Bedford College. I have applied to University of Bedfordshire to study for a degree in Sports Rehabilitation and Training. I was silent for years; I didn't want to discuss my condition with anyone, I was embarrassed and ashamed. With the support of family and friends I have spoken to Versus Arthritis and last week my story was shared on their website, Facebook and Instagram. With the support of Mr Gleeson, I would also like to share my story with you.*

*This condition isn't going away and it affects young children. It can take away a young persons' confidence and freedom. However, this condition won't beat me; I have learnt to accept that some days I struggle to get out of bed and other days I could run a marathon. I am Versus Arthritis and I would like to inspire and inform others.*

Please find the link to my story below:

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/news/news/i-want-to-raise-awareness-about-arthritis-in-young-people/>

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

## Wootton Upper School News

### Cyber Crime

Mrs McMorn writes,

"Year 9 pupils have all seen a presentation on Cyber Crime organised by Bedfordshire Police. This presentation was aimed at keeping safe online. It was wide-ranging which covered areas such as:

- ensuring your passwords are sufficiently complex
- keeping bank cards safe
- keeping safe using apps such as snapchat.

Year 9 learned that their data is stored for years and years and this includes when they are 'ghosting'. They also learned that they can be found - even when they have switched their location off on their phones.

Impacts of not staying safe online - being targeted by unpleasant people, or serious repercussions for bullying and holding/passing indecent images were also covered.

Wootton Upper School also covers online safety in PSHCE lessons in all years, recapping key points regularly via Form Tutors and in assemblies via Year Leaders.

Online safety, and appropriate use of apps is a key area for all teenagers and we are keen to reinforce these important messages.

*Thinkuknow* is the education programme from NCA-CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline: [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Need-advice/?](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/?)

This site provides guides for parents for specific platforms/risks which they believe that trusted adults should be aware of: <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/wake-up-wednesday/>

### Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Mrs Farrant, Safeguarding and Early Help Officer has asked us to make parents/carers aware of an event taking place next Tuesday morning, 12 November between 9.30 and 10.30 at **Flitwick Children's Centre, Malham Close, Flitwick**. West Mid Beds Early Help Locality Team is holding a Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing drop-in when key support agencies [School Nurses, CHUMS, CAMHs] will be in attendance to provide guidance and information to families with children who feel anxious or have low self-esteem. Please see our Wootton website for more information.

### Meet the Tutor Evening Wednesday 16 October 2019

Mrs McMorn writes that it was fantastic meeting so many Year 9 families at our "Meet the Tutor Evening" before half term. We asked families two questions: **'how can we improve communication?'** and **'did your child have a successful transition?'** We had lots of responses; there were many positive comments regarding our weekly newsletter and emails in general. Some parents asked for more communication by text message. This is something we can look into, although these are not good for longer messages. We do want to get communication right.

### Key email addresses are:

Attendance:	<a href="mailto:attendance@wootton.beds.sch.uk">attendance@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
Year 9 Leaders:	<a href="mailto:pbailey@wootton.beds.sch.uk">pbailey@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a> <a href="mailto:astrickaland@wootton.beds.sch.uk">astrickaland@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
Year 10 Leader:	<a href="mailto:jkane@wootton.beds.sch.uk">jkane@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
Year 11 Leader:	<a href="mailto:erughoober@wootton.beds.sch.uk">erughoober@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
SENDCo	<a href="mailto:jholmes@wootton.beds.sch.uk">jholmes@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
Safeguarding Lead	<a href="mailto:kenser@wootton.beds.sch.uk">kenser@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>
Vice Principals	<a href="mailto:cmcmorn@wootton.beds.sch.uk">cmcmorn@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:sfrazier@wootton.beds.sch.uk">sfrazier@wootton.beds.sch.uk</a>

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

**98% of responses reported that their child had a positive experience of transition.** We want to make that 100% next year, and any feedback on ways we can improve our systems is always welcome.

Thank you for giving us your views.

## Kimberley College News

### Attendance

We promised to let you know about attendance levels at Kimberley College in the first half term.

Year 12	94.4%
Year 13	90.1%

We know there is a strong correlation between attendance and outcomes and therefore our Pastoral Team will be working very hard with those students whose attendance is below 95%

**We would like to ask for your help by keeping us informed if your son/daughter is going to be absent from college and the reason for their absence.** It also helps us to keep students safe and avoids us sending you messages to let you know your child is absent when you already know about their sickness absence.

**If your son/daughter is going to be absent from College please go to the college website home page and press the button marked Reporting Absence:** <https://www.kimberleycollege.co.uk/report-absence>.

Following this procedure will enable you to give our Attendance Staff the information they need. Thank you.

**Currently, we send out an email to let you know if your son/daughter is absent and we have not been informed of the reason. However, we only get a 15% response from parents to these emails with a reason for the absence.** From Monday 11 November 2019 we will continue to send an email, but we will also send a text message, just as we do at Wootton Upper School. Some parents/carers have told us they would prefer to receive text messages.

### Parent Governor Vacancy

We will update you next week with on the Parent Governor Vacancy position. A number of conversations will take place early next week.

### Other Governance Vacancies

We hope to recruit a support staff governor to the Kimberley College Local Governing Board in the next few weeks and also to seek to appoint some partnership governors from higher education and local employers. Please do let Kami Patel [kpatel@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:kpatel@wootton.beds.sch.uk) if you would like more information. Thank you.

## News from Wootton Upper School

### Year 11 Parents Evening

On Wednesday we held the first Year 11 Parents Evening. 76% of parents attended the event. Whilst this is a good turn out; it does mean that one -in-four parents did not attend. These consultations enable pupils to agree to their next steps for learning with their parents present and to go on to get good results in their mock examinations next month.

It was a very long event for everybody with the first appointments being at 4 pm and the last appointments scheduled for 8pm. Some appointments were still going on at 8:45 pm. The main reason for this was due to some parents requesting additional appointments at the event itself as well as some appointments lasting longer than the scheduled five-minute slot.

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

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Mr Frazer, Mrs McMorn and other senior staff will look at whether we need to make any adjustments to the way we operate these events, before the Year 10 event takes place on Wednesday 27 November.

## **Non-Uniform Day - Friday 15 November 2019**

Just a reminder that we are holding a non-uniform day next Friday for all pupils and staff. The money raised will be shared between the Royal British Legion Poppy Day Appeal and Children In Need. The minimum donation is £2 per child and £5 for members of staff.

On Sunday, the nation pauses to remember the hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors and RAF personnel who gave their lives in two world wars and in other conflicts so that we may live in freedom, in democracies built on tolerance and respect. We will hold our own two-minute silence on Monday morning, Remembrance Day itself.

We will remember them.

Yours sincerely

Wootton Academy Trust