

Drapers' Academy

Principal: Mr Darren Luckhurst, BSc (Hons)
Chairman of Governors: Mr Tim Orchard, MA (Cantab)

Settle Road, Harold Hill, Romford RM3 9XR

T: 01708 371331

F: 01708 347515

E: admin@drapersacademy.com

W: www.drapersacademy.com

Friday 5th April 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Once again we have had a busy, productive and rewarding term. However, it has also been tinged with sadness and much concern within our community. I would like to thank you and your families for the respect shown for Jodie Chesney. I am encouraged with how the community has dealt with the recent events. What happened to her should never ever happen – for us parents it is our worst nightmare. A young lady at the start of what would have been a wonderful life. I did not know Jodie and neither did the majority of us, however I am very proud with how my pupils and students have responded with such humility to such a heinous crime. We paid our respects to Jodie and her family by having our own Purple Friday, flying a purple flag half-mast and raising funds to go towards her funeral. I hope that if nothing else, the shock that this tragedy has given us will go some way to preventing further loss of life.

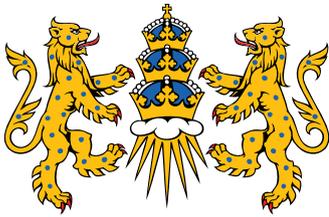
As I have already mentioned in a previous letter, we will continue with educating our pupils and students about the issues of knife crime. However, schools alone cannot be responsible for the solution to this societal problem. I hope, as we all do, the Government realise the need to fund schools, NHS, Police, community groups etc. with appropriate income so that together we can begin to improve this rapidly accelerating problem for our young people.

Time flies by as the days become weeks, weeks become months and months become years. When I first notice the daffodils appear, this always coincides with our increased momentum and focus for our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils, as we help them prepare for their GCSEs and A Level examinations.

Spring brings with it a chance of hope for new beginnings. As we approach Easter, the trees come alive with their blossom and the more temperate weather is welcomed by all. The Easter holiday should provide us all with much needed quality family time and hopefully time to chill. By chill I do not mean to do nothing! Besides, our Year 11 and 13s have revision to do. I mean you should do something different, socialise (in person and not just over social media), exercise, go to the cinema etc. Whatever you decide to do, make the most of the two weeks break.



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Year 11 and 6th Form

For several years in my career, I have written to parents stating that this period is stressful for pupils, students and teachers, as well as the families. Last year I experienced first-hand just how stressful this time can be. I empathise with parents and realise just how difficult this time is for you too. Sometimes as a parent you will feel there is nothing you can really do. I would say there is always something you can do, the minimum being to ensure your son/daughter has a dedicated place in the home to study and to ensure that they revise thoroughly. Teenagers are experts in making you believe they have spent hours revising but how do you really know? Ask them to show you the work they have done, praise them for working hard and try to instil confidence in them that this hard work will pay off in their GCSE results. The forthcoming weeks will be stressful for them so ensure they take time to relax a bit too and talk to them about how they are feeling.

It is now up to the pupils to plan each week leading up to their exams and then to stick to these revision plans. You can help by sitting down and discussing each week ahead. Twenty minutes helping them to organise their week ahead is one of the most valuable things a parent can do during the exam season. Whatever was planned by my daughter, I CHECKED it had been completed. This routine has really helped and we continued this right up until the last examination.

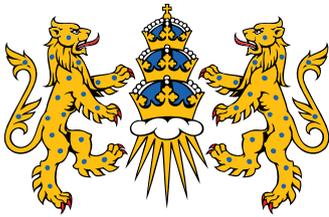
Your son/daughter has been provided with a list of dates for when their exams are. Ask them to show this to you in order to help you plan effectively as the days approach. We also have additional revision material on our school website that pupils last year found very useful. Many pupils have been invited in for additional sessions over Easter. If you have received a letter for any of these sessions, it is important that your child attend. These sessions are compulsory

The internet has a vast array of support material to help pupils and students with their GCSEs or A Levels – therefore do not believe them if they say they have nothing to help them revise or no past exam questions to complete!

Pupil numbers for 2019

As you will be aware, we are a very popular school. I have recently received data from the local authority regarding preferences for our upcoming Year 7 for September 2019. We received 330 preferences and have made 210 offers for 210 places. Once again we are an over-subscribed school. For the first time we will be virtually full in each year group, including the Sixth Form. We look forward to welcoming our new Year 7s in September.





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Behaviour

Pupil behaviour in and around school is good and continues to improve. In September 2018 we had a 'no notice' Inspection, Ofsted noted '*pupils feel safe and well cared for. Bullying is rare and they feel very confident in the ability of staff to deal with it. Due to your concerted efforts, and revised procedures, the rate of pupil exclusion has fallen considerably in the last year*'.

We are pleased with this progress and will continue to work to achieve outstanding behaviour. Parental support is crucial for this and I thank parents in helping us achieve this significant improvement. I have attached the letter I received from Ofsted.

Attendance

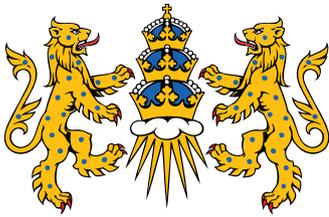
Again Ofsted were pleased with our progress '*Pupils' attendance has improved in the last year and is close to the most recent national average.*' I urge all parents/carers to continue to support us with improving attendance even further. Please note that in September pupils/students do not return from the summer break until Monday 9 September. This is particularly late this year and therefore we would appreciate families taking advantage of this later return to take cheaper holidays in line with this but ensure that all pupils return to school on this date.

There is still a way to go to improve our Persistent Absence and families not taking holidays in term time would help a great deal. We are also continuing our drive in the Summer Term to continue to improve our attendance figures for 2019. We are organising an event called 'Mega May' whereby we are encouraging all pupils to have 100% attendance over the period Monday 29th April to Friday 24th May. There are just 19 school days during this time and hope that the pupils/students will be able to achieve this 100% goal. With your encouragement, we could have great success. There will be several prizes and rewards for those forms, individuals and even families who achieve 100% attendance. There will be a prize draw for a 'family meal voucher' at a local restaurant. We do hope that everyone will get into the spirit of the competition and aim for full attendance over this time.

Punctuality

In addition to attendance, we have had to focus on punctuality this last half term as a number of pupils have been coming in late to school. Whilst this is getting better, I would like to remind you that your child should be in school by **8.30am** and **no later**. Arriving on time allows a good, prompt start to the day. It is important that all pupils/students are here for registration and assemblies that begin at 8.40am. During this time, important information and messages are given out to pupils/students to ensure a smooth running of their day. Please encourage your child to be here on time, fully equipped and wearing full school uniform and ready to learn.





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Social Media

From time to time, the school is written about in a negative way on social media, mainly on Facebook community pages. I would urge you that if you have a complaint to make, please ensure that you follow our complaints procedure outlined on our website. This is there to support our families when things go wrong. We will then endeavour to put things right, to ensure the best possible education for your child.

Sharing your views publically can sometimes bring undue stress for other parents, as often the issues raised are concerning an individual and not widespread. I urge you to raise your issue directly with the school and not over social media. I appreciate your support with this matter.

You can write to the school directly using the following email, admin@drapersacademy.com. Please include a name of who you wish the correspondence to go to. If you are unsure, please address it for my attention and either I will respond or I will nominate a relevant member of my team to do so on my behalf.

Spring Marathon Runners

It is the season for marathons and we have three members of staff who have been training for months in order to complete the gruelling 26.2 mile distance. Ms Khouri, a science teacher, is competing in the Brighton Marathon on Sunday 14th April. We wish her the best of luck for a fast time. Two weeks later the London Marathon takes place on Sunday 28th April. We have two members of Drapers' Academy running from Blackheath to The Mall. If you are going to London to watch the race (or even watching from home) please keep an eye out and give a big cheer for Ms Abdullah, also from science and myself (once a science teacher as well) as we do our very best to get around the 26.2 mile course. Next year we hope that other departments take on the challenge, the gauntlet has been thrown down!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable Easter break. **The term finishes at 12.30pm on Friday 12th April and we look forward to our pupils and students returning at the normal time of 8.30am, Monday 29 April 2019.**

Best wishes

Mr D Luckhurst
Principal



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