

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016

Dear Parents & Carers,

### **Happy Holidays...**

Well, we have finally made it to the end of another academic year, the school's fourth - and my sixth heading the project too! We have seen a massive jump forward in practice and standards, had huge numbers of students joining us since September, started our extension project and had the joys of an Ofsted inspection too. All-in-all, it has been busy, to say the least...

### **Ch-ch-ch-changes - staff**

It's the time of year when we inevitably say goodbye to some staff as they move on.

**Miss Mistry** and **Miss Ward** have been with us since we opened in 2012, as key members of the team that opened a school when many others said it couldn't be done. They were there when various actions were taken to stop us from opening and then to shut us down; when IT systems refused to work in the early days; and when things settled down and the school grew to be the place it is today.

**Mrs Perry** came on board in September 2014 and has done sterling work establishing R.E. and philosophy as respected, academic subjects, enjoyed by all students up to GCSE. **Miss Ironside** has just been with us for her NQT year - but even in that short period has shown herself to be a fantastic professional, with a great teaching career ahead of her.

We wish all of them the very best as they explore the next stages in their careers and lives - be that promotion, moving areas or learning to surf in New Zealand!

It is wonderful to be in a position where we have stability in our staffing, with some extremely exciting, strong appointments made for new staff this September. I will write more about these in the new academic year.

**However, I will say now that we are going to be fully staffed with subject specialists** - quite an achievement, especially in this area, and in subjects that face a shortage of good quality teachers. Our growing reputation as a good place to work makes all the difference as we recruit people - and this has only come about because of the hard work by existing staff, and the excellent attitudes displayed by our students.

### **Ch-ch-ch-changes - site**

The summer holidays are the best chance each year to make significant improvements to the school building and site. As well as the ongoing extension works on our roof, **Mrs Edge has carefully budgeted to allow us to make other changes too.**

By September, we will have completely re-carpeted the entire building, with the last of the worn-out stuff we inherited finally gone. New, more durable, blinds will go in most classrooms - to help keep them cooler and more conducive to learning. There will also be new fire doors and holders around the building too - meaning the flow around the building will be that bit smoother and quicker.

These plus other works are a subtle but important part of our ongoing programme of improvements to help staff and students get even more out of their time in school - and **I want to thank Mrs Edge and her team for organising all of these.**

All being well, next year will see even more improvements - given everything else going on this year, we couldn't physically get more builders on site this summer!

### **REMINDER - The start to the autumn term**

A quick reminder again of the arrangements for the start of the new academic year:

- **Year 7 and Year 11** - return on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September
- **Year 8, 9 and 10 Reward Trip to Thorpe Park** - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September
- **All students return & lessons start as usual** - Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September

### **Contacting school during the holidays**

We are quite unusual as a school in that we ensure our office is staffed all year round, apart from the days between Christmas and New Year. However, because of the building works taking place this holiday **the school will be completely closed down - and without electricity - for the first two weeks, until August 8<sup>th</sup> August.**

We will be remotely monitoring emails and phone calls during this period, but we may not be able to respond to things as quickly as we usually do. Please bear this in mind should you have any queries or need to contact us during this time.

That's it from me for now. Have a wonderful summer break – we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September!

All the best,

**Mark Lehain.**

### **Key dates for 2016-2017**

25 <sup>th</sup> August	GCSE Results Day – results available to students from 10.00
5 <sup>th</sup> September	Staff return to school
8 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 7 and Year 11 return to school – usual time of 0825
9 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 8, 9 and 10 Reward Trip to Thorpe Park
12 <sup>th</sup> September	All students in school, lessons commence, lineup at usual time of 0825
24 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> October	Half term holiday
16 <sup>th</sup> December	Last day of autumn term
3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Staff training day
4 <sup>th</sup> January	Students return for spring term
13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Half term holiday
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Last day of spring term
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Start of summer term
29 <sup>th</sup> May – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Half term holiday
21 <sup>st</sup> July	End of summer term