

Dear Parents and Carers

July 2019

As the year draws to a close, we wanted to write with some key information for next year. Firstly I am delighted to announce the appointments of the **Head Boy and Girl** for next year – Finlay Dixon and Lydia Brain and their Deputies, Cody Allen and Rachel Hunt – we are already incredibly impressed with their work so far and particularly their wonderful public speaking skills as showcased at our recent Year 5 and 6 evenings.

Please forgive the very long letter, but we wanted to write to you with all the information that we think will be useful. We have received feedback that our communication on the 'big things' hasn't been as good as it could have been. We wholly accept this – it is something we will work on next year and we apologise for any confusion/rumours that may have arisen that have overtaken our rate of communication.

However, we hope that our Twitter and Facebook feeds and the new Parent App we launched this year have kept you more informed of the day to day things that are happening.

### Staff Changes

As in every school, staff changes each year are the norm. Across the campus, we have approximately 80 teachers and 120 support staff and we are always sad to say good bye to staff but we wish them well: most staff leaving are moving onto promotions – which we are thrilled about, or are retiring. We thank them for all they have contributed and wish them luck in the future.

#### Teachers Leaving

Mrs Cummings – Art/DT Teacher  
Miss Hutchings – Head of History  
Mrs Keighley – English Teacher  
Mrs Maxwell – Head of Languages  
Mrs Riches – English Teacher  
Mrs Richter – History Teacher  
Mr Sawyer – Head of Technology (Wyvern)  
Mrs Spencer – Science Teacher  
Mr Willan – Maths Teacher

We also say goodbye to Mr Pearson who has been helping with maternity cover in the English department and to Miss Whittaker who has been training as a History teacher with us this year.

## Support Staff

We are also saying goodbye to some support staff who have been with us a long time but are now off to enjoy a wonderful retirement!

It is a very sad goodbye to Mrs Inman, School Business Manager who has been with us for 23 years. Huge thanks to her for all she has contributed over the many years of excellent service she has given. We also say goodbye to Mrs Robins (Finance Admin.) after an epic 22 years – we know lots of you will have had your Parentpay issues resolved by her over the years! Also retiring, is Mrs Blackham who has worked with us for 6 years, and finally, we say goodbye to Mrs O'Hare, who is leaving to start teacher training – good luck!

## Other staff changes

**Mrs Smith** (Deputy Head) has been seconded to Bemerton St John Primary, one of the schools in our Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), for two days a week for next year – she will continue with some of her senior leadership responsibilities at WSE including leading on the further development of Parent Voice.

**Miss Sluman** has been seconded to a central role as Careers Adviser for the MAT for one year.

**Miss Evans** and **Ms Foyle** from English will be away on maternity leave but **Ms Foster** and **Mrs Loader** will be back from September.

**Mr Anderson** has stepped down from his role as Head of Geography to work part time: **Mrs Roycroft** has been appointed to lead the Geography department.

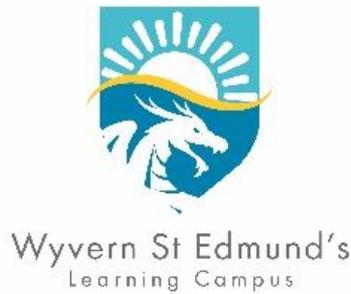
**Mrs Scott** is leading the Art and Photography department during Mrs Quelch's maternity leave.

**Mrs Hayakawa** has stepped down from her role as Head of Dance to focus on being a Head of Year.

## New Teachers

We are thrilled to have been able to appoint new staff to the vacant posts and also grow our staff; this is due to the increased numbers of students coming the campus next year. Wyvern had a very small Year 11 group of only 37 students this year, and we are admitting a record 107 boys into Wyvern in September. Both schools are now over-subscribed.

We will introduce our new staff to you early in September by way of letter – but we have certainly attracted some brilliant teachers. The average number of applications has been incredibly high and appointments were hard fought for! For one role, we had nearly twenty applicants – this is almost unheard of, particularly in these times of teacher recruitment issues.



Wyvern St Edmund's Learning  
Campus  
Church Road  
Laverstock  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 1RD  
Tele: 01722 328565  
Email: [office@wyvernsteds.org](mailto:office@wyvernsteds.org)  
Website: [www.wyvernsteds.org](http://www.wyvernsteds.org)

## Pastoral Leaders

We are retaining our Head of Year system but each Head of Year will now work across the learning campus, being responsible for both boys and girls. They will be supported by a non-teaching member of staff from the pastoral support team.

Head of Year 7 – Mrs Kantolinna supported by Miss Beal

Head of Year 8 – Mr Elliott (covering Miss Foyle's maternity leave) supported by Mrs Crook

Head of Year 9 – Mrs Webb supported by Mrs Devall

Head of Year 10 – Mr Newell supported by Ms Batchelor

Head of Year 11 – Mrs Hayakawa supported by Mrs Milner

## Tutors

Tutoring remains one of the most important jobs for any school teacher. Form tutors are key pastoral professionals who are there as a 'first port of call' for both parents and students. Their primary role is to help develop the personal attributes, social skills and character of the tutees in their care. During tutor time next year, tutors will be following a tailored curriculum to help tutees to develop their character, where there are also regular opportunities to discuss progress and attainment. There will be an opportunity in the autumn term to meet your child's tutor and to find out what is being covered in tutor time in more detail. In addition you will receive a termly phone call from the tutor to check how your child is progressing from your perspective.

Please see the attached information regarding changes to tutors next year.

## Safeguarding

This is always a key priority for the school this year. We have increased the level of supervision at all times of the day; for example all SLT members have been on duty during lunch time every day of the school year. Plans are in place to improve the facilities in the Year 7 yard over the summer and to hopefully develop an outdoor gym that can we use all year round. Over the Easter holidays we installed a number of CCTV cameras across the site in key positions to improve our passive supervision; further installations are taking place in the summer holidays to include a camera on the increasingly well-used bike sheds.

Front perimeter fencing has been improved earlier in the year where we installed a fence joining the Science block and the Hall. During the summer period we will see an additional fence erected between the former caretaker's bungalow and the Drama Studio. This will mean that the entire front perimeter is adequately fenced, providing a more robust level of security. In addition to this we will be insisting that students use the entrance on the far right hand side of the site (the original Wyvern entrance) as

both the main entrance and exit onto the learning campus. This entrance is purpose built for high volumes of traffic, and with a single access point we are better placed to monitor safe transit. This will be called 'Student Reception'.

The central (original St Edmund's) reception will still be in use, but will be for visitor use only. Students who arrive late will report to the Student Reception.

Please bear in mind that at the beginning and the end of the day, the majority of students exit the site via the that exit or by the buses. We restrict parents from using the site to drop off their children unless there are exceptional circumstances. Safety is of paramount importance at these times. Cars coming onto the site delay buses and can contribute to a traffic bottleneck outside the school entrance. We ask that all parents dropping students at school do so a short walk away from the site, or to make use of the London Road Park and Ride and purpose built footpath running from London Road to Church Road. If you feel there are very exceptional reasons meaning that an on-site drop off is required for example, medical needs, please contact the Office Manager.

The school is open to students from 7.45 am; **please note that there is no supervision before this time.** We will provide a small number of supervised zones from 7.45 until 8.00 am. From 8.00 am until 8.20 am there is an increase in the number of supervised zones as staff start their working day and perform morning duties.

## Lunches

We hope that your child has enjoyed the choice of food on offer this year from both Dining Halls. The MAT has recently recruited an Executive Chef who will be working with our catering team to ensure that students are receiving the best quality healthy food available, and to ensure that students experience a high-quality dining experience. If your child has packed lunches, or brings a snack into school, please note that **we will become a 'nut free' school from September**, so students must not bring any nut products onto the site. Please can you ensure that any packaged food or sandwiches bought onto the site do not contain nuts. We have an increasing number of students and staff on the site with serious, potentially fatal nut/peanut allergies and we need to make sure that we minimise the risk of exposure to allergens.

## Rewards

If you have already signed up to the **SIMS Parent App** you will know that Reward Points can be viewed live on your mobile phone when they are awarded. We hope that this provides a positive talking point with your child. We have received some feedback that suggests that some students are not always receiving the recognition that they deserve; this is particularly pertinent in years 10 and



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11. Consequently, we are **adjusting our guidance to staff** from September in order to dramatically increase the number of reward points being awarded. Each member of staff will award a minimum of one student with a reward point every lesson. Previously, there has been no mandatory expectation regarding reward points. In addition, regarding the very popular reward post cards, teachers will be asked to send least one postcard per teacher, per week. Staff will vary the recipients of postcards to ensure that a variety of students receive postcards home.

## Charities

It has been an incredible year for fundraising this year with the schools raising **£15,268** for our charities: OAKS School, Cancer Research UK and The Stars Appeal.

We are thrilled to have been able to fully fund a new classroom building for the OAKS school in Sierra Leone – and it has been named after us – the Wyvern St Edmund's classroom! Thank you for all your incredible support with this.

## Behaviour

We thank you all for your support in embedding the Behaviour Policy this year. We have had regular visits from external consultants, including Brian Hooper OBE, who is a member of the national Headteachers Board. In fact, during his last visit to the school Mr Hooper suggested that student **behavior for learning was the best he had ever seen in either school**. We will continue to maintain our very high standards and our commitment to guarantee to students and parents disruption-free lessons every period of every day.

Our senior prefect team has been leading on a school-wide **cultural pledge** which will set out very high expectations of cultural behaviour and attitudes across the site; raising the bar on what we expect from a Wyvern St Edmund's student, and from a Wyvern St Edmund's staff member. We will keep you informed of the cultural expectations we have in place for 2019-20 – these will be shared with students next Monday for their feedback.

## Attendance

**Attendance remains a key priority for the school**. Following a recent consultation with a leading SSAT (the schools, students and teachers network) school attendance expert, there will be some changes with regard to the systems and procedures that take place in school. In short, this will mean that students will discuss absences more frequently with staff; parents will receive more communication from the school about their child's attendance; and the frequency of School Attendance meetings will increase. All of the strategies are designed to support students, parents and the school to maintain high levels of attendance. There is compelling research available which

suggests that attendance below 97% can have a significant effect on outcomes for young people and so we want to support you and your child to ensure that they meet their potential.

### **Medical**

Please can all medicine be collected by the end of term from the main school office. In addition, please can all medication for the next academic year be delivered to the main office on the first day back - clearly labelled and in date. This includes asthma inhalers and epipens.

### **Eco-School Work**

Our students are becoming increasingly passionate, and rightly determined, to take steps protecting the environment. We want to harness the collective desire, as stewards of our environment, to take positive steps to reduce our ecological and carbon footprints. In recent assemblies we have talked to students about how each individual can, through a disciplined approach, reduce their carbon footprint and also have an influence on people around them. We have talked about our commitment as a school to reduce our carbon footprint through a range of strategies such as: considering any site developments through the lens of sustainability; looking at all of our operations, such as the sourcing of food and energy supplies, to reduce our carbon output; and bringing in new recycling bins across the site from September so that less waste is going to landfill.

Mrs Newman will be leading on our Eco-Schools initiative from September, as Eco Co-ordinator. Your son or daughter will have the opportunity to join the team, as an Eco Rep or volunteer, and in doing so make a lasting difference to our school environment. More details will follow in September.

### **Update on the Wyvern St Edmund's Journey**

The journey of the creation of the Wyvern St Edmund's Learning Campus continues after a very busy year and we are so grateful for all the support, encouragement and positive feedback we have received from you.

We were particularly pleased with the overwhelmingly positive parental and student responses from our most recent survey. We always strive to deliver the best possible education for our students and so we were pleased to hear that you feel we are doing this. We also know that there are always things to work on, and one of the key areas for improvement for next year will be around communication.

We are trying to keep you updated more than ever through the termly newsletter, the SIMS parent app, our Twitter and Facebook accounts etc, but we are keen to hear your views on how we can improve this even more. One of the issues raised at the Parent Forum (4<sup>th</sup> July) was the problem of rumours about what is happening at Wyvern St Edmund's next year. We would like to address these

as follows and again apologise to those who have felt that the communication hasn't run as smoothly as it should. We absolutely agree and will endeavor to work with you to improve this.

## Separate Schools?

The schools legally remain separate, but the staffing, policies and procedures, including the School Improvement Plan, span across the learning campus. There is one Head, one leadership team and one middle leader for each department/year group, and most of the departments are now co-located, with the exception of Art and Technology. We have found ourselves no longer referring to areas of the site as "Wyvern" or "St Edmund's", instead referring to the areas depending on the service they provide e.g. "Maths (old Wyvern D block). All enrichments, trips and events will be mixed, (including the Main Choir – we need more boys please!) to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all students across the campus.

## Mixed Teaching

In response to feedback from our new parents, the new Year 7 intake will be in mixed tutor groups and be mostly mixed in their lessons too. This is the direction of travel that has been decided for the schools in the future, but this change will happen year on year – **all other tutor groups in Years 8 - 11 will remain single-sex.**

**Year 8** – this year, the current Year 7, more than any other year group, had some mixed teaching, and this will continue into Year 8. However, PE, Maths and Language lessons will remain single sex.

As parents and carers of next year's **Year 9** students know, we wanted to give students some ownership over the curriculum and so we asked them to make choices about which performing arts and technology subjects they would prefer to continue to study. Just like at GCSE, this is only feasible if we mix the classes. This will also allow us to increase the amount of subjects we can offer and also increase our capacity to 'set' students by ability in some subjects. Students will still be in single sex classes for Maths, Science, Languages and PE.

Mixed lessons in **Year 10** have been the norm for a long time as St Edmund's and Wyvern collaborated (previously also with St Joseph's) for more than ten years or so, to ensure that students had a wider range of GCSE subject choices, for example, Music and Drama. Maths, PE and Science teaching will remain largely single-sex though. **Year 11** can expect to be taught in their lessons as they have been in Year 10, with the exception of some set changes. This is particularly evident in Maths where students' setting will be updated regularly, based on their performance throughout the year and in the end of year exams.

## Uniform

As you will be aware, we tested a **summer uniform** for Wyvern students which included tailored knee-length shorts and a plain white polo shirt (to achieve equality with the blue summer polo shirt worn by St Edmund's students). The trial has been very successful and popular with the students. Therefore, we have decided that we will now adopt the optional summer uniform in the new uniform policy. During the autumn term we will be working with our uniform supplier to ensure that a branded white polo shirt is available to buy before the summer term. Plain white polo shirts will not be permitted in the summer of 2020. Some students have told us that they would like the option of joint Wyvern St Edmund's uniform items. **We will not be insisting on a change of uniform for any existing students.** It is more likely that we will introduce a summer polo shirt with the WSE logo as an option for Years 7-11. Any change will be led by students and will also be discussed at one of the Parent Forum meetings next academic year.

There is a **slight change in the uniform policy** for next academic year. Due to health and safety reasons, students will only be permitted to wear a single stud in each ear lobe, and will no longer be able to wear sleepers (small hoops). This is due to health and safety concerns and advice that we have taken – even small hoops can easily be caught on things e.g. jumpers, bags etc and so, for the safety of students, we have taken this decision.

As a reminder, plastic retainers, which are sometimes worn soon after a piercing has taken place, are not permitted. Therefore, please can I urge parents to consider the timing of any piercings to ensure that there has been sufficient time for any piercings to heal. If your child would like to have a new piercing, we recommend that it is done at the start of the summer holiday so that it can be removed for school in September.

## The "House" System

Next year, we will be undertaking a **review of the current House system**. Both schools had House systems, but following a recent survey, our students told us they would like the Houses to be combined. We will be undertaking a full review, led by students, to re-establish the House system for key events, for example the Sponsored Walk and Sports Day, and students will be suggesting and voting on new names for the Houses. There has been some confusion around this, as the new Year 7 tutor groups will be named after their tutors, rather than assigned to a House (for example 7EEn – the tutor is Mr E England). This is because the tutor groups will be mixed and therefore we can't assign them to the traditional house names from either school. PE colour tops for St Edmund's students have been assigned randomly. We value the House system highly and look forward to suggestions about the way forward from our students.



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Thank you for all your support this year and for your patience with us. We know there have been teething issues along the way – inevitable with a big project such as this – but we are really looking forward to a smoother September and to the future of the Wyvern St Edmund's Learning Campus.

### Warm Regards

**Nicola Bull**  
Headteacher

**Bruce Burley**  
Deputy Head

**Caroline Smith**  
Deputy Head

**Dan Jeffries**  
Deputy Head