



Thursday, 20 October 2022

Dear Families,

Re: Year 7 Update – Autumn Half Term 1

I am writing to you at the end of Year 7's first half term of secondary school to provide you with some key information and updates.

These will include information on:

1. The Year 7 Residential Trip
2. Extracurricular Activities
3. Library Access
4. Using Class Charts to Monitor Students' Behaviour
5. Reminders – Staying Organised and Mobile Phones
6. Key Dates for your Diary
7. Uniform and Lockers
8. Safeguarding

Firstly, we are incredibly impressed with the mature way Year 7 have begun their secondary school journey. They have quickly got to grips with their timetables and navigating their way independently around the large school buildings. Their attitude to learning has been excellent, and they have supported each other in ensuring everyone is included and made to feel part of the year group. So far this term, Year 7 have earned a staggering 47,158 merits between them! Despite 7D leading the merit totals the whole half term, 7S have now taken 1st place on the leader board! Ahead of our assembly on Friday morning, tutors have been asked to award certificates to their 'Star Student' of the half term. I know many of the tutors have found it difficult to pick just one student! Year 7 should be very proud of their achievements so far and we will continue to celebrate with them throughout their time at Sydenham.

As always, we are very grateful to you, as parents and carers, for supporting them in their transition to Sydenham School, including ensuring they arrive to school on time, with their equipment and in the correct uniform, and ready to learn. The partnership between home and school is essential in ensuring our students' success and happiness, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all over the next academic year.

Year 7 Residential Trip

Last week, 188 students in Year 7 (and their tutors!) embarked on their residential trip to Kingswood, Grosvenor Hall. Whilst there, students participated in a range of teambuilding and high-adrenaline activities, including Indoor Climbing and the 'Jacobs Ladder.' It was a brilliant opportunity for students to forge new friendships and strengthen the bonds between themselves and their tutors. We were impressed with how brave the students were with tackling new challenges and the support and



kindness they demonstrated towards each other! We are immensely grateful to the staff who gave up their time to support with this trip. We hope students gained a lot from the experience and will look back at the photos with fond memories.

Joanna 7H - *"I really liked the rock climbing. I also liked seeing the sea cadets and the army soldiers doing their practice marches as well! It was super fun when we did the mini Olympics!"*

Kenza 7H - *"I most enjoyed the 'Scrapheap Challenge' where we had to dress Khimarni up and then do a fashion show after! We came third but I think our costume looked the best!"*

Extra-Curricular Activities

We know many Year 7 students were very keen to sign up to our extra-curricular clubs and have taken advantage of all the wonderful activities our staff organise and run every day. Year 7 have been participating in Gardening Club, Netball Club and Astronomy Club to name but a few! The expectation is that every Year 7 student participates in at least one extra-curricular club a week, as it enables them to form new friendships and builds confidence. Please encourage your child to sign up for a club if they have not yet done so. The full timetable can be accessed here: [Year 7 - Sydenham School](#)

Library Access

A reminder that our school library is open every day after school from 3.20pm – 4pm. This is a quiet space that students can use to complete their homework, read and use the laptops. Often, Year 7 students find it easier to complete their homework at school so that they can relax when they get home. Please do encourage your child to make the most of this space. Students should bring a reading book with them every day as part of their equipment list – our school librarians are always happy to support students with finding a book to read and have plenty of reading suggestions! KS3 students also spend two periods per fortnight in the library during their English lessons completing the 'Accelerated Reading' programme and have time allocated in these lessons for book borrowing.

Using Class Charts to Monitor Students' Behaviour

All students were issued with separate student and parent login details for Class Charts during the first week of term. Please ensure you have downloaded the App and use Class Charts to actively monitor your child's punctuality, behaviour and homework as this is one of our key channels of communication between home and school. Your child will also be able to use the app to see their achievements, be notified of any detentions and see when their homework is due – this is also an important way in which they can develop their own independence towards their studies.

Reminders – Staying Organised and Mobile Phones

All students were also given a planner on their first day at Sydenham. It is important that they bring this to school every day, as we use the planners in a variety of different ways in lessons. Students should also get into the habit of recording their homework here, including when it is due. Please monitor your child's planner regularly and sign it every week. Tutors will also be signing planners on a weekly basis (Monday mornings).



Additionally, we would be grateful if you could please remind your child of the school rules regarding mobile phones. Mobile phones should be switched off and in students' bags until they are out of the gates at the end of the day. If a student's phone goes off, is in their blazer pocket or seen on site, it will be confiscated and returned to the student the next day once a meeting or phone call has taken place. Whilst the vast majority of students follow these rules easily, a small minority are finding this more challenging. Having no mobile phones on site reduces bullying and friendship issues, and ensures students are fully focused on their learning.

Key Dates for your Diary

- Year 7 Parents Evening: Wednesday 19th April 2023 (please note the change of date)
- Year 7 Assessment Week 1: Tuesday 3rd – Tuesday 10th January 2023
- Year 7 Assessment Week 2: Monday 12th June – Monday 19th June 2023

Uniform and Lockers

Please ensure all students arrive to school in full school uniform worn correctly. If your child wears earrings, please ensure it is only one small pair of stud earrings in the lower ear lobe. Any additional piercings, either in the ear lobe or in the nose, are not allowed and will have to be removed before arrival to school. The same applies to false nails. Students should also only be using the Sydenham School backpack. Please see the link to our school uniform policy below:

<https://www.sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk/fs/resource-manager/view/a4c969d0-4e00-44e5-b5db-3bbbb4e7f0e1>

We appreciate uniform can be very expensive and the link below directs you to Sydenham's upcycled Uniform site: <https://app.uniformd.co.uk/items/157>

It would be very helpful if you ensure all your child's items are labelled so that, if any items are mislaid, they are more likely to be returned promptly to the owner.

As mentioned in our Newsletter, the lockers are only available for students on the day they have PE to store their PE Kit. All items and padlocks should be removed from lockers at the end of the day. No other equipment should be stored in the lockers and no equipment should be left overnight.

Students were given until the end of the half-term to clear their lockers and remove any locks. During the half term break our Premises Team will be removing any remaining locks and appropriately disposing of any items that have been left behind.

If your child needs a locker for medical reasons, please speak to your child's tutor in the first instance.

Safeguarding

As part of our health and safety responsibilities, we are required to plan and practice for an 'emergency lockdown' scenario. This involves being prepared for a scenario in which a dangerous person/s have entered the school site with intent to harm students and/or staff. This is extremely unlikely to occur but, as a school, we have a responsibility to be prepared for this scenario.



Students and staff will be fully briefed in advance of the drill and will have the opportunity to ask questions about what will happen and voice any concerns.

If your family requires welfare or wellbeing support over half term, please refer to our safeguarding guide for a directory of services which can be found here: [Safeguarding Directory](#)

If you have a safeguarding concern about your child or any child who attends Sydenham School, please contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for the borough in which the child resides. Lewisham MASH can be contacted on 0208 314 6660 or MASHagency@lewisham.gov.uk.

If you have an urgent safeguarding concern, please contact the relevant emergency service. If you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do, go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111. If you want to contact the police, ambulance or fire brigade, dial 999 in an emergency or 101 to report a concern or a crime.

We will return to school at 8.40am on Monday 31st October. I hope that the students have enjoyed their first half term at secondary school and have a wonderful half term break. We will be encouraging our staff to turn on their out of office replies on their email inboxes over the holiday.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's tutor in the first week back.

Yours sincerely,

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