



20th October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a great start to the new academic year. Students have returned to their studies with renewed enthusiasm after the summer break. Year 7 have settled in well and are now fully emerged in the day-to-day life of the school.

Our calendar of events has been as full as ever. Years 7 and 9 have very much enjoyed the Phasels Wood experience. Their outward-bound activities helped in developing their teamwork, resilience, and curiosity. Our commitment to broadening the educational experience of our students this term has included our Year 12 Politics students visiting the Houses of Parliament and our A level Biology students experiencing field work first hand in their residential trip to Devon. Our now annual Year 11 History trip to the First World War battlefields in Belgium took place between 9 -11 October 2023. The students visited the Flanders Fields Museum, walked along trenches, and experienced the very emotional sound of The Last Post at the Menin Gate. Our students represented our school with great pride and professionalism.

We were delighted to welcome back Dr Martijn Van Do Spoel. A Chartered Psychologist and inspirational speaker who works nationally and internationally with Year 11 students. He helps them focus on maximising their potential this year as they plan for their exams, and into the future. Feedback from our students was resoundingly positive. Many gained insights into study and revision methods that would enhance their learning without adding additional hours to their already full lives.

It has been another busy half term on the sporting front, as our students look to emulate the phenomenal success they enjoyed last academic year. We were off to a flyer in the Badminton, Volleyball and Table Tennis competitions as all of our teams finished either top or second in their groups, after the first round of fixtures. Our Netball and Girls Football teams have started the season with some impressive wins. All of our Boys Football teams have progressed to the quarter finals of their tournaments. Our Under 16 Netball team won the first Netball tournament of the year to retain their title. Some of our successful borough sides enter county competitions and our U15 Boys Football team are safely through to the second round of the Middlesex competition, while our U16 Netball team (who were the only state school in Harrow to enter) were unable to progress they did record two notable victories against independent schools in the Middlesex regional group stage.

The first Review Day of the year took place yesterday and it was lovely to see so many of you able to attend. This is an important day in our calendar, providing students and parents with an opportunity to meet with tutors and look at progress and wellbeing holistically. Students tell us they find it very helpful to have this opportunity to talk to their tutor about their overall school experience and they

Headteacher Mrs Colette O'Dwyer
Thistlecroft Gardens, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1PL Tel: [020 8952 2803](tel:02089522803) Fax: 020 8952 6975 www.parkhighstanmore.org.uk
Twitter: [@ParkHighNews](https://twitter.com/ParkHighNews) Facebook: [@ParkHighStanmoreOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/ParkHighStanmoreOfficial) Email: info@parkhighstanmore.org.uk
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value the opportunity to have their voice heard. This is further enhanced by the subject specific parent teacher consultations later in the year. The Pastoral Support Assistant for your child's year group will keep you informed of the arrangements for those meetings.

On Wednesday 18th October, we hosted another successful Careers Fair where students had the opportunity to meet with representatives from a range of universities and colleges. This event is an integral part of our much wider Careers Education Information, and Guidance (CEIAG) programme which runs from Year 7 to Year 13. Students tell us this is often the event that starts them thinking about what they want to do next, as they realise that the routine of school will inevitably come to an end.

After a very competitive recruitment process in the Sixth Form, we were very pleased to welcome a Student Leadership Team to assemblies in all our year groups this half term, where they set out their responsibilities in their roles, how they will work with other year groups and also their aspirations for their futures.

There is no year group newsletter to parents this half term as it will be issued termly instead as a pilot. Therefore, the next edition will arrive in December, and we will keep this under review in the new year.

Thank you for your support of our fund raising for Cancer Research. The Shine Walk in September has now raised over £14,000. The staff completed the walk in memory of those in our families and community we have all lost, and for all those we know who are survivors of cancer. Today is Wear Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness and many of our staff have done just that today to further fund raise, brightening up a drab Autumn morning with splashes of Pink.

Student Wellbeing During the Half Term Holiday

We understand that young people may need to access some support for their wellbeing and there are a number of organisations signposted on our school website [here](#). In particular we would like to draw your attention to [Kooth](#), which is a free, safe, and anonymous online mental health service commissioned across the UK by the NHS, Local Authorities and Charities to provide free online mental health support. If you are worried about your child and would like further support, please contact your Pastoral Team when we return after half term.

Vaping

Vaping seems to be an increasing problem amongst young people nationally and sadly we have noticed that trend at Park High, most worryingly amongst some of the younger children. As parents are probably aware, the legal minimum age to purchase vapes is 18. Unfortunately, we have become aware that some shops are willing to sell vapes to younger children. The Safer Schools Officers have been made aware. The BBC have picked up on this current social problem and this article on the BBC website will provide you with more information:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-62052286>

Dates to Note:

- School reopens on Monday 30th October for all students.
- Term dates are Monday 30th October - Wednesday 20th December 2023.
- Inset Days for staff are Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th November (students are not on site).
- Year 11 Practice Exams begin 14th November.

Don't forget the clocks go back on Sunday 29th October.



I wish you and your families a peaceful half term break. Stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Colette O'Dwyer
Headteacher

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