

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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*A Church of England School
providing a Values-based Education*

30th September 2024

Update Letter

Dear parents and carers

We have had a great start to term ... it's gone so quickly that it's hard to believe that we have reached the end of September!!! Students have responded well to our value of the month challenges around 'responsibility'. We have focussed very much on action and 'taking a first step'. Students have all been given tutor-group challenges to do something different. 7TB were challenged to visit elderly relatives – they have extended this challenge beyond their personal connections and, with the help of their tutor - Miss Brumsden – they are going out into the local community to visit a care home and spend some time with local residents - especially those with relatively few visitors or family of their own. We look forward to hearing how they get on ... and we look forward to seeing what the other tutor groups do.

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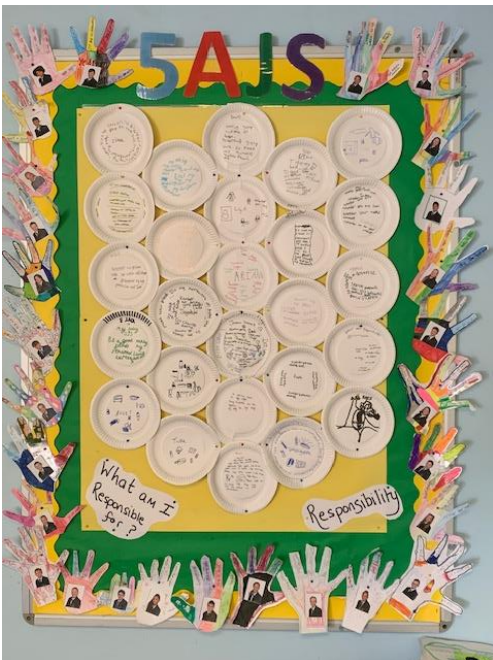
Value of the Month: Responsibility
September 2024
Take a Step

"For we are each responsible for our own conduct." Galatians 6:5
Our actions have consequences, and we are accountable for the choices we make.
This verse emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility in living a life that honours God and reflects His character.

IT STARTS WITH YOU

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the FIRST STEP

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Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care



Students have also been exploring what responsibilities they have (and they have captured these on their 'plates of responsibility'). This has helped everyone in each tutor group to understand what responsibilities we all have to deal with and they have been exploring how we can support each other to deliver on these responsibilities. We'd also like to hear what students have done at home to show responsibility; our new organisers have now arrived in school and these have pages in them where you can let us know of examples of where students have demonstrated their values (particularly the value of the month, but also any other value in practice).

Uniform

One responsibility all students have is to wear the correct school uniform. The vast majority of students have returned in full, correct uniform and they are all looking incredibly smart. We do often have to remind students to 'tuck their shirts in' but, in general, they are all very smart.



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher: Mrs A Stewart-McAlpine – Deputy Headteacher: Miss A Craddock

Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs A Stewart-McAlpine & Mrs J Johnson

Senior Leaders: Mr M Eames & Mrs J French – SENDCo: Ms C Patterson

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It is really important that all items of uniform are labelled so, if anything gets mislaid, we can return it to its rightful owner. There has been some discussion and debate around a few aspects of the uniform, so here are some points for clarity:

- Skirts must be plain grey, pleated skirt and knee-length
- PE shorts must be black and between mid-to-knee-length; tight 'pant'-style shorts are not acceptable for school and students will be asked to replace these if worn (we will have some emergency supplies in school)
- Shoes should be black (No boots, trainers or heels higher than 4cm); just because a shop/retailer labels a pair of shoes as 'school shoes' does not automatically mean that these are the correct shoes for Holywell. We ask that shoes are shoes (!) ie. made of strong material (usually leather) with a stiff sole and a heel. Please see the updated images below of what is expected (NB. this is not an exhaustive list but it indicates the general styles).

Acceptable shoe styles



Unacceptable shoe styles



NB> NikeAir-Force Ones or any other sports branded footwear or non-branded trainer style are not acceptable footwear



We appreciate that some students are currently not wearing shoes in line with this guidance and we are giving a grace-period until October half-term for the correct shoes to be acquired. After half-term, students with incorrect footwear will be provided with an alternative to wear in school until this is remedied. The weather after half-term will also necessitate a stronger and more robust shoe being worn.

Charity Non-uniform Days



There are some days when we do not wear uniform at all! These organised, charity non-uniform days are always well-supported and they are relatively easy ways to raise money for charity, whilst having an opportunity to wear something different at school. This half-term, we have two non-uniform days:

- Thursday 10th October - Hello Yellow - Wear Yellow for World Mental Health Day
- Friday 25th October - Bishop's Harvest appeal

On Thursday 10th October, students and staff will be encouraged to wear something yellow for World Mental Health Day. On the 25th October, we will have another non-uniform day which will be to support the annual Bishop of St Alban's Harvest Appeal. - this will be a free non-uniform day and, when we do a non-uniform day for the Bishop's Harvest Appeal. This year, the theme is "Thrive: Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka." The Bishop's 2024 Harvest Appeal is being run in partnership with The Leprosy Mission to support a project in Sri Lanka, which provides those affected by leprosy with the means to grow their own food and raise their standard of living. If students wish to take part in these days, we request a £1.00 donation. We will collect the donation for both days on Friday 25th October and we'll split the money raised between the two charities.



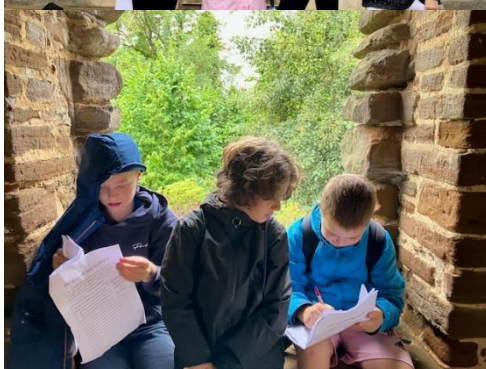
Other dates for your diary

- 14th and 16th October – Year 7 History Trips to Mountfitchet Castle
- Thursday 17th October – Tutor Evening – an in-school event and opportunity to meet form tutors and have a pastoral check-in.
- w/c 28th October – Half Term



Wrest Park

Year 6 students visited Wrest Park, Silsoe as part of their curriculum work in English and Art. In English, students are working on narrative writing. The context for this is World War 1: students learn about life in the trenches and work on creating texts with atmosphere, tension and dialogue. The first part of their text is set in the trenches; this section ends on a cliff-hanger, with their hero-protagonist soldier losing consciousness. The second part of their text sees the soldier arrive at Wrest Park – Wrest Park was used as a field hospital during the war. Students do some locational research to help them to imagine what it would be like for the soldier – the calm and beauty of Wrest Park being a stark contrast with the horror of the battlefield. For their artwork, students do some sketching and also explore the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Andy Goldsworthy is an English sculptor, photographer, and environmentalist who produces site-specific sculptures and land art situated in natural and urban settings. We were very lucky with the weather!



Day of Languages

Last Thursday, we celebrated our diverse cultures through European Day of Languages ... which was not just a celebration of European languages, but all the different languages spoken at Holywell. Students were proud to wear their family-heritage colours and we all learned how to say 'hello' in several different ways – including British Sign Language. Thanks to the MFL team for putting this together and watch out for the results of our bunting competition.



Thank you!



... and, on the subject of the weather, thank you to everyone for being so understanding and flexible in the light of our recent weather challenges. I don't think anyone has experienced this level of rain for such a long time and I hope that you haven't been too affected by the localised flooding. It really does help us all to put things into perspective and it is often in times of crisis that we appreciate the little big things which we often take for granted – such as being able to drive down the A421 or get from one end of the village to the next. The Chinese symbol for 'crisis' is made up of two symbols: one denoting 'danger', the other denoting 'opportunity'. It is often in times of danger and crisis that we find ways to work together in community and to find opportunities and new ways to solve challenges so that everyone can be safe ... and dry!

As we move into October and put a spotlight on the value of 'Justice', perhaps we can all explore ways to ensure that we do not accept what 'just is' and focus on ensuring 'justice' (fairness) for all.

We will also be celebrating 'Black History Month' where the focus this year is on 'reclaiming narratives'. This marks a significant shift towards recognising and correcting the narratives of Black history and culture. By emphasising "Reclaiming Narratives," we shine a brighter light

on our stories, allegories, and history. This theme underscores a commitment to correcting historical inaccuracies and showcasing the untold success stories and the full complexity of Black heritage. It's about taking control of stories and honouring heroes while challenging the narratives that have often overlooked the contributions and achievements of Black individuals both in the UK and globally. We will be sharing a wonderful poem by John Agard – [Checking out me history](#) – which highlights the challenge and introduces us to some significant Black heroes: Touissant L'Ouverture, Nanny de Maroon, the Caribs, the Arawaks and Mary Seacole. Who are your Black heroes? It would be great to start a conversation at home.

Thank you for your continued support.

MG Simpson

Mike Simpson
Headteacher