

Newsletter

15 November 2019



Dear Parents/Carers,

Although I'm writing the newsletter today (Friday 15th), you probably won't get it until early next week. As you know, we had to close the school yesterday in rather dramatic circumstances, so I'm typing this at home.

When I arrived in school yesterday, staff were coming in telling me about overnight snow. Luckily, we decided to read the Inclement Weather Policy, though we didn't for a second think we would be using it quite so quickly. We certainly didn't expect heavy rainfall to be the issue. Our site team worked hard to keep the site open but the main road into Berkeley Green dips and the rain accumulated there very, very quickly. Apparently, this is incredibly unusual and flooding like this hasn't been seen since the late 1980s. According to the BBC website, we should now get a dry few days and things can return to normal.

On to other matters, we are delighted to let you know that we have just purchased three pieces of software which we believe will make a big difference to developing the independence of our students. The first is called Hegarty. It is a fantastic Maths programme which students have just been introduced to. It enables students to thoroughly practise their Maths skills online, and has detailed instructional videos. Please ask your son or daughter to show it to you. Homework and revision will be set using Hegarty and the simple fact is that the more students use Hegarty, the more their confidence in Maths will increase.

The second piece of software is called Show My Homework and we will launch this shortly. It will enable students and parents to find out what homework has been set very easily and to check that it has been done. We will send you instructions on how to use this in due course. The final piece of software is called Unifrog. It is designed to help students plan their next steps after the UTC, whether that's an apprenticeship, employment or further/higher education. It is a very high quality resource and we can't wait to get started with it.

On that note, I am delighted to tell you that our year 13 students who are applying to university are already getting offers. The first student to submit their UCAS form had received offers from all five of their chosen universities within a fortnight. That's a great achievement and we intend to send the final applications within the next few days.

We had two whole school assemblies this week. On Monday, we held a Remembrance service, led by Andy Keenan, one of our Assistant Headteachers who formerly served in the RAF. Remembrance events are always moving, but they are made all the more so when surrounded by respectful, thoughtful young people. You couldn't hear a pin drop during the minute's silence. Moments like this remind us what's at stake during times of political turmoil, and hopeful that this younger generation will learn from the past.

Three of our sixth form students also spoke to the whole school this week about their plans if elected to leadership positions on the student council. Ed McMullan, Charlotte Cartwright and Katherine Thomas presented their ideas very clearly and confidently, and students said they were impressed by what they had heard. The staff are looking forward to working with the student council and seeking student views on a range of issues. Good luck to them all!

Finally, I'd like to come back to the issue of 'professionalism', one of the core values of the UTC. Students have recently contacted me on issues such as the use of phones in lessons to listen to music, and whether or not

certain items should be worn at school. I appreciate the politeness of the students involved and the fact that they have taken steps to improve their school experience. Inevitably, there will be times that we won't be able to meet their requests because we believe that doing so won't be in the wider interests of their learning, or the school ethos, but that doesn't mean we don't appreciate their ideas. Indeed, we welcome them.

Enjoy your weekend.

With very best wishes,

Louise Davies

Headteacher