

SUNNYDOWN SCHOOL

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Friday 19th November 2021

Dear all who are associated with Sunnydown,

Why try to say something that is said so much better by one of our families in a recent email?

I hope that this email finds you well. We just wanted to express our thanks for the great support and communication updates from Sunnydown during this particularly tough period. Although our son is unwell, he has still been able to attend his lessons every day this week. It has been hugely reassuring for us that he has been able to maintain his contact with school. The speed in which the online lessons were up and running was exceptional. It has been an absolute pleasure to see our son enjoying school so much since he started in September. Please convey our thanks to all of your staff and send our best wishes to those that are unwell. We wish them all a speedy recovery.

Building from this, it is important to remember that we continue to live in a world dominated by Covid, and the interruptions are far from over. The resilience (refer to the three P's from last week) demonstrated by students, families and staff alike is nothing short of admirable. Students continue to attend school when they are Covid free without disgruntlement. Those who are isolating and well enough continue to access lessons online and are engaged in active learning. Of course these lessons are delivered by my incredible staff team who remain under immense pressure. Due to Covid, some lessons are being delivered by a single person, with attention split between students accessing learning remotely and those in the class. The dedication of my staff team, often juggling multiple tasks and responsibilities simultaneously, is inspiring. Many have offered to continue to work from home, delivering lessons live, even though unwell. The education and welfare of your sons could not be in the hands of a better team.

To all families, but in particular those who continue to find the ongoing Covid situation and associated pressures difficult, please do not hesitate to reach out for confidence. All requests made directly to me are treated with dignity and respect. I would hope that the vast majority of family sentiments are reflected in the email above, that they are pleased that their son attends a world class school. Further, I trust that families are able to put into context any observations they may make of our efforts rather than criticise unduly, possibly under the veil of social media.

I am absent from school today, attending a funeral for Mr Stuart Read. Stuart was the original 'pastoral support' - from him and a vision to provide world class emotional and mental health support, we are where we are today. Such was the impact of his efforts that I am taking an ex-Sunnydown pupil who remained in contact with Stuart even after they both left Sunnydown. It is respectful young men like this that we are so proud to acknowledge are Sunnydown students.

Mr Lord has been and will continue to be in communication with Year 11 families about any changes to GCSEs. Recent guidance has required close contact with the exam boards to fully understand how they will impact what we offer. Please be patient as we work hard to get this communication and our next steps accurate.

The Ofsted report will be live on our website on Monday, and distributed further according to Ofsted requirements. I am incredibly proud that the areas that we chose to strategically focus on; emotional well being and mental health, are recognised as transformative. As a result of these efforts, students are able to demonstrate progress beyond 95% of special schools nationally and exceeding many local secondary schools. It is valid that the inspectors would like to see additional planning in specific subjects when they return, but they were incredibly complimentary in their feedback on the teaching that they observed. Processes have already started to redress any recommendations made. As a school, Sunnydown is unique and our staff deliver a world class experience for your sons. This is reflected in the direct feedback to senior leaders when Clive Dunn, the lead inspector announced that if he had a son with Autism, he would send him here! He also acknowledged that the school is most certainly not in decline.

Join with the family who sent in the email above and acknowledge and reflect on what we do offer. Share your positive stories with one another, and if you will, with my staff. To celebrate all that we have achieved at Sunnydown, we are considering holding a Sensational Sunnydown event. We will showcase our burger van, cycle mechanic workshop, landscaped gardens, animals, Sunnydown Synaptic, Unique Art Awards, Remembrance day ceremony and the incredible learning that goes on day in, day out. We will also collate many of the letters and emails from families who have shared their sentiments and gratitude for the experience and education their son gets at Sunnydown.

It is such a shame that events such as art gallery visits, football tournaments and cross country races are affected by Covid. However, when they do take place, many of our students are selected to represent their school for the first time. An opportunity, possibly not available at all other schools. The impact on wellbeing is measured in the size of the grin when the lads return home, pleased to have been given a chance, often triumphant in defeat and victory in equal measure. These grins and moments of pride extend beyond the sporting field to poetry competitions, Unique Art Awards and visiting world centres of research such as King's College.

Initial feedback from our online Year 9 Parent Evening has been resoundingly positive. This positivity is not only directed towards the running and coordinating the event (thank you Miss Lawson and Mr Lord) but also to the staff able to attend (yes Covid affected many appointments). Also reassuring was direct feedback on how pleased families and the young men themselves were with the progress they had made.

Regarding Covid, we are starting to see students and staff return following periods of isolation. In spite of our best endeavours, other students will become unwell. We continue to maintain the wearing of masks in communal areas for staff and students, and encourage all students to wear masks in taxis. Staff and students are encouraged to sanitise their hands on arrival and departure from school, and through the day. Should staffing levels fall to a level where it is unsafe or impracticable to have all students onsite, we will assess the situation dynamically and may need to ask particular classes to remain home. This would always be a last resort, as we know only too well as parents ourselves, of the impact such closures have on families. In such circumstances, we have decided to prioritise keeping KS4 students in school where possible. Information on vaccinations for children above the age of 12 can be found at the link below:



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine-for-children-aged-12-to-15/>

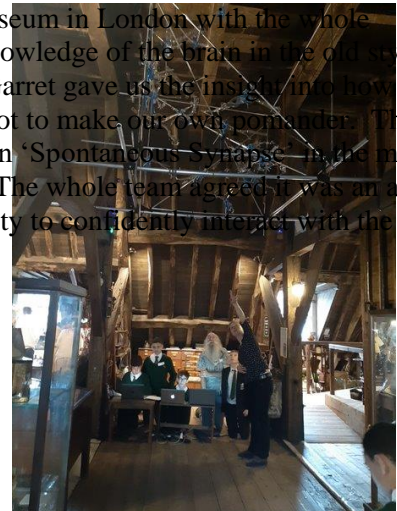
Have a wonderful weekend.

Paul Jensen

Trip to The Old Operating Theatre Museum and Herb Garret



On Tuesday 9th November we spent the day at the Old Operating Theatre Museum in London with the whole Sunnydown Synaptic Team. It was a fascinating experience revisiting our knowledge of the brain in the old style operating theatre that dates back to 1822. The original timber framed Herb Garret gave us the insight into how herbs and medicinal plants were dried and stored to make medicines and we each got to make our own pomander. The highlight was revisiting the artist Charlie Murphy's glass sculpture installation 'Spontaneous Synapse' in the museum, which will showcase the work of the boys up until the end of January 2022. The whole team agreed it was an absolute pleasure working with the boys. Their knowledge, inquisitive minds and ability to confidently interject with the team of professionals was wonderful to see. Well done to you all.





Miss Wood

Friends of Sunnydown

Quiz night: As you will be aware from earlier correspondence, the quiz night scheduled for today has been postponed to early 2022 (date TBC). This is due to increasing Covid 19 rates within school over the past week. If you have booked a ticket, please email friends@sunnydown.surrey.sch.uk to let us know if you would prefer a refund or to roll your ticket to the new date.

Snow day: Regretfully, we have also made the difficult decision to cancel the long-awaited family snow day, planned for Saturday 27th November. However, we are very keen not to disappoint the boys, so we are still planning to hold a snow day for them in smaller groups whilst in school on Friday 10th December.

School Lunches

Please find below the cost of school lunches for this half term. Apologies for the delay in getting this information to you:

Autumn Second Half Term 2021
Tuesday 2nd November - Friday 17th December 2021
Cost of lunches for this half term is £81.60.

School Fund: All pupils are asked for a voluntary contribution of £10.00 per half term.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks.

Children In Need

Miss Leonard organised a cake sale at breaktime today for Children in Need. A total of £29.20 was raised for the charity and we will be sending this money off to them shortly.

There was also a 'Guess the number of sweets in a jar' competition. The winner of this was Max Mahboobani (9C). Well done!



Artist of the Week

The recipient of Artist of the Week, awarded by Mrs Ogle and Miss Adams for brilliant photography in the art lesson is:

Henry Hilton
(11Z)

Thought for this week (W/C: 15th November)

Anti Bullying Week - National campaign idea

Thought for w/c: (W/C: 22nd November)

Tolerance - How to tolerate each other

House Points

Henry Hilton	500 House Points
Ollie McEvaddy	350 House Points
Logan East	200 House Points

Friday Curriculum: 26/11/21

A timetable of events will be sent out next week.

Link to Sunnydown Form Page for all other updates:

<https://sites.google.com/sunnydown.surrey.sch.uk/sunnydown-learning-hub/home>