

Wednesday 7th September, 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are all safe and well. Your children have returned to school looking particularly smart and keen to start the new academic year! The attitude and behaviour of all students was simply outstanding in the welcome back assembly Mrs. Windsor and I delivered to students. I emphasised making the most of every opportunity during their time at Priestnall; we have a wealth of extra-curricular programmes for students to choose from, including our exciting Super Curriculum programme, and I would encourage your child to get involved in many of our student leadership groups too. Our Extra-Curricular offer can be found on our school website under the Curriculum section and will updated again shortly.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the class of 2022 – last years' Year 11. This group of fantastic students left with a set of absolutely excellent GCSEs – they were also **Priestnall's best ever GCSE examination outcomes!** Despite the media regularly referring to 'over inflated grades' issued by schools during 2020 and 2021, this is clearly not the case at Priestnall – **our results were above Teacher and Centre Assessed Grades issued in 2020 and 2021, and higher than GCSE examination results in 2018 and 2019.** This is due to the commitment, determination and positive engagement of those students, the support from you at home and the great teaching and support that is available for everyone here, should they need it. We are going to miss Year 11 but wish them every success as every one of them moves on to their college places or apprenticeships. They have very bright futures ahead of them! We believe that our current Year 10 & 11 GCSE students are in a great position to achieve just as highly as the previous year group.

Attending school every day is absolutely essential – every lesson counts! Our attendance is above the current national average and our students' punctuality to school is very impressive from the majority of students. We would, however, appreciate it if you would avoid taking your child out of school during term time, unless this is completely unavoidable.

Our Wellbeing Centre, Restorative Hub and wealth of pastoral expertise in school continues to be available to support your children and continues to make a difference to so many of our young people. Our fixed term exclusions are now extremely low and I am particularly proud of the support that students can access to enable them to be successful. If your child needs additional support of any kind, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the pastoral team and they will do all they can to help.

Our new Year 7 have made a very good start and seem to be settling in very well already; I hope that they have enjoyed their first few days at Priestnall and look forward to the year ahead. Our new Resource Base opened this September and it was a privilege to meet these fabulous young people and hear all about their ambitions for the future – one student enjoyed sitting on my office chair and looks forward to being the Head of Priestnall one day!

This term, we welcomed:

Mr. Josh Parker: Teacher of History
Ms. Alex Lennie: Teacher of Science
Ms. Amparo Quintero Ferrando: Teacher of Spanish
Miss. Sian Jones: Teacher of English/History
Mrs. Sara Francis: Teacher of English
Mr. Ryan Lee: Teacher of Maths
Mrs. Amina Hamdan: LSA

Our new Catering Manager is now Mrs. Sheila Rochford who has been promoted from within the school to replace Sue Horan who retired in the summer.

Following Ms. Durkin's decision to step down from the role of Director of Learning for MFL, Miss. Halfacre, Assistant Headteacher, will be overseeing the strategic development of MFL for the next twelve months and will be supported by Ms. Fildes (now Mrs. Ainsworth), Curriculum Leader. We are also working closely with another local school to further develop languages provision. We are now in our third year of delivering Spanish, as well as French and we are looking forward to seeing this develop with the appointment of our new Spanish teacher.

We are looking forward to hosting our live Open Evening on Thursday 22nd September, from 5.30pm – 7.30pm. This is for **current Year 6 parents/carers and their children only**. We will be planning to invite other parents/carers into the school to see us 'in action' at a later stage in the year and I will communicate further information to you very soon. In order to prepare for our Open Evening, all students in Years 7 - 11 will be finishing school at 12.35pm on Thursday 22nd September. If these arrangements create difficulties for you, please let us know and we will accommodate your child within school until the usual finish time of 3.15pm. A 'grab bag' will be available from the canteen for those students who are entitled to a free school lunch. If you do not want your child to receive a grab bag, please email to let us know. Any students who are helping out will be given further information and a permission letter shortly.

Traffic outside Priestnall school between 8.30am – 9am, then 2.45pm – 3.30pm tends to be extremely busy and we would appreciate it if you could avoid parking close to school or in front of our neighbours' driveways. This is to ensure the safety of all students and members of our local community.

In terms of communication, I would advise that you always contact your child's Learning Co-ordinator should you have any concerns or have any questions about anything. Your child also has a College Manager and a Director of Studies, as well as a senior link. Our SENDCo is Mrs Gibani who is assisted by Mrs Kennelly. This term, there will be some changes to the roles of the Director of Studies: Miss Griffin is now the senior leader for our new Resource Base and Mr Kneen continues to be the Assistant Head for Personal Development. Both of these roles are significant and central to the development of the school; on a positive, both colleagues are still here and will continue to support all children as the need arises. We will shortly be appointing two new Directors of Studies for Rylands and Bridgewater from within Priestnall and I will update you again about these appointments in due course.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,



Craig Burns
Headteacher