

# Meopham School

A Member of Swale Academies Trust

Headteacher: Mr E Roberts BA Hons. PGCE NPQH



Wrotham Road Meopham Kent DA13 0AH

Tel: 01474 814646

Website: [www.meophamschool.org.uk](http://www.meophamschool.org.uk)

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you've had a great week. As we finally say goodbye to winter, it is lovely to see some nicer weather and to provide the students with more opportunities to enjoy the fantastic natural surroundings we have at the school. We've been able to open up the school fields for students again at Break and Lunch and - now that the weather has improved - we can begin the final stages of developing the new school site, by planting all of the grass seed and shrubbery (in areas that used to be more of a construction site!) to return the school to the rural feel it always previously had. Spring and summer are lovely times of the year to walk the grounds at Meopham and we are looking forward to providing more opportunities to have parents and carers on site soon!

## Well Done

Congratulations to the following students who have received Headteacher Commendations in the past week:

**Lily B (Y8) - Geography** - beautiful Geography work in her book throughout this term on the topic of Brazil.

**Tomisola G (Y9) - Geography** - going above and beyond in his Geography book, reading around the subject and supporting his learning with a GCSE revision guide.

**Harry N (Y10) - English** - demonstrating tenacity and making excellent progress in a recent *Macbeth* assessment.

**Martha P (Y10) - Catering** - great food presentation.

**Theo H (Y10) - Catering** - tenacity displayed in lesson.

**Autumn H (Y10) - Catering** - excellent practical presentation.

**Tina Marie N (Y10) - Catering** - displayed great tenacity in lesson.

**Caitlin B (Y11) - Spanish** - commitment and effort during the mock exams.

**Cairon S (Y7) - Music** - excellent effort, focus and incredibly helpful to other students.

**Evie H (Y7) - Music** - excellent effort in Music.

**Oliver T (Y7) - Music** - fantastic effort and playing during practical.

**Miley M (Y9) - Geography** - excellent work during every Geography lesson. Miley is a pleasure to teach. Well done.

**Broly D (Y9) - Geography** - Broly is showing such enthusiasm for the subject of Geography. He is asking great questions and his work, focus and attention to detail is now showing in his class book. Well done Broly.

## Sporting Events

The last week saw the following results from our sports teams:

Our **Year 9 girls netball team** drew **11-11** with Mayfield. Commiserations to our **Year 10 girls netball team** unfortunately lost to Mayfield **8-4**.

Our **Year 9 boys football team** achieved a convincing **3-0** victory over Leigh UTC

Our **Sixth Form boys football team** unfortunately lost **4-2** to St George's, although it is great to see that our Sixth Formers are still regularly involved in the sporting life of the school!

On Tuesday we took six students to the **Kent Schools Trampolining** competition. All students did really well and we are really proud of them. Huge congratulations to **Olivia N (Y10)**, who came **1st** in the **Under 15** event and is now **Kent Champion**. The Year 8 team of Anabelle, Lilly, Ellenor and Daniella came **2nd** in the **Under 13** team event!

### **Swalestock - a message from Mr Knight**

Once again, Meopham School hosted the annual Swalestock event, when the nine secondary schools within Swale Academies Trust send representatives to compete in a highly professional performing arts competition. The following students performed at Swalestock on behalf of Meopham School this year:

**Albie S (Y11)**  
**Henry P (Y11)**  
**Louie S (Y11)**  
**Penny I (Y11)**  
**Sam F (Y11)**  
**Izzy S (Y10)**  
**Harley G (Y10)**  
**Cameron S (Y10)**  
**Bebe S (Y10)**  
**Julia B (Y9)**

They were simply brilliant ambassadors for our school on Tuesday: welcoming and supportive of nervous visitors from other trust schools and so helpful throughout the day. They took on feedback and advice as soundchecks happened and performed brilliantly. I am very proud.

**Harley** and **Penny** were singled out by the teachers from the other trust schools and were given individual awards for their efforts/performances.

Well done to everyone involved and a big thank you to **Mr Knight** for organising the event!

### **Year 11 Geography Trip - a message from Mrs Hatch**

Year 11 Geography students will be going to Reculver Beach on **Tuesday 1st April**. This field trip is a compulsory element of the GCSE Geography course. The school must have received a completed permission form; the link can be found in the letter emailed to parents. Students may wear non-uniform but should be dressed appropriately for cold weather, walking a good distance, and waterproofs if necessary. They will also need to bring a pen, pencil and their food/drink for the day. If you have any questions regarding this trip please email [jill.hatch@swale.at](mailto:jill.hatch@swale.at)

### **Attendance and Punctuality - Please Read**

We would like to thank parents for their continued support in our quest to raise student attendance and punctuality to both school and lessons. High attendance is absolutely crucial to every child's success, as we can only provide students with the best possible education if they are in school with us, learning.

There is still significant work to be done in this area. **To be frank, our students' attendance is still below national average and we all need to do better.** Improving attendance takes a joint effort between school, students and families.

In most situations 90% would be seen as a positive outcome, but in terms of attendance this equates to one day off school a fortnight. The disruptive impact this has on a student's progress and understanding is clear, and therefore we want to continue to support **students to be in school for at least 95% of the time.**

Year 11 students with near-perfect attendance are almost **twice as likely** to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar students attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, **missing just 10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%.**

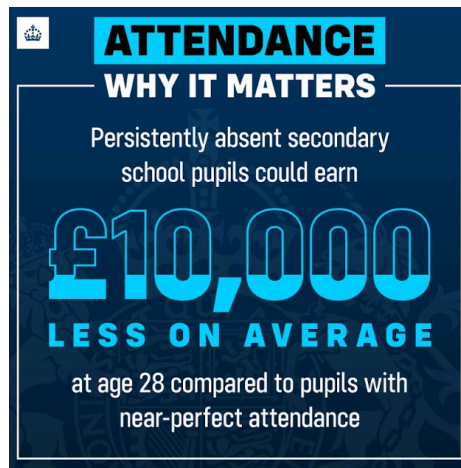
A student is deemed as **persistently absent** if their attendance falls below 90%. At that point, the student's progress is even more severely impacted, and this has real-world, long-term consequences.

Persistently absent students in secondary school could earn **£10,000 less** at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance.

For **each additional day of absence** between Years 7 to 11, the typical student could miss out on an **average of £750** in future lifetime earnings.

Not only does poor attendance impact that individual student, but it also has a very negative impact on others, as attention is taken away from other students during crucial lesson time to catch up persistently absent students on missed work or where they struggle with understanding due to missing lessons. In a class of 25 students, if one student needs to be caught up, they would typically need a minimum of five minutes of individual support from their teacher. That means there are **2 hours** of other students' potential learning time that is missed. If that has to happen in all six lessons that day, that's **12 hours** of potential learning time missed by the rest of the class - and that's the impact from one student for one day.

As a parent or carer, you have an important role in making school attendance a priority. **Only keep your child off school when they are genuinely too ill to attend. Book medical appointments outside of school time whenever possible and do not take students out of school for holidays.** If you're having difficulties with your child's attendance, please feel to contact the school for support.



As you know, we have also been putting in place strategies to improve punctuality amongst the student population. We are seeing the impact of this, with **lateness to school decreasing every week** since our new procedures have been launched - thank you to parents and carers for your support in making this happen.

### **Talking Learning Event - Wednesday 26th March**

As some of you will know, we have invited a number of students to attend our staff's Talking Learning Event next Wednesday. This is a wonderful activity that I have brought over from my previous school, where students meet with teachers and show them all of their books and talk to them about all the fantastic things they have been learning this year.

There is no better training for our staff than to sit with students and hear from them first-hand how they feel lessons are going. They are the reason we do the job so it is so important that their voices are heard and we gather feedback from them on what we can be doing to make their lessons as engaging and inspiring as possible.

Furthermore, it is an excellent leadership opportunity for those students who have been selected, as they will have the chance to take part in some professional conversations with teachers - not to mention it will look great on any future prefect or similar student leadership applications!

Of course, we do also provide plenty of cake, tea and squash to keep everyone going, but we are really looking forward to having the opportunity to chat to our students about their learning and we hope this will become an annual event.

### **Moving Forward**

We continue to see improvements week-in, week-out at Meopham and - whilst it is a marathon, not a sprint - we hope you are beginning to see the impact of some of these changes.

We know, for example, that home-school communication is one thing parents and carers have been keen to see improve. This is the motivation behind us recruiting an additional Receptionist - to provide more capacity in that area - and you should notice from next week that voicemail capabilities have been added to lots of key staff's direct phone lines.

The easiest way to communicate with school will still be through our communications portal (which can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/swale.at/msscoms/home>) however, hopefully these additional measures will also provide further improvement to how we communicate with you all as a school.

On our parents' and carers' end, it is absolutely crucial that you have downloaded the **My Child At School** app in order to receive vital communication from the school. **Information on how to access this can be found at the bottom of this letter.** Please ensure you use the same email address that you have provided to the school previously.

We will continue to strive to improve your child's educational experience each and every day with the same dedication and tenacity we expect of all of our students. Together, we are going to make Meopham School a truly excellent place of learning in a truly excellent community.

Have a great weekend,

Mr Roberts  
Headteacher



Set up your  
free **My Child**  
**at School** app  
account today



School Postcode  
DA13 0AH

my  at  
**childs**school.com

By using My Child at School (MCAS) you will be able to view your child's:

- Timetables
- Reports
- Attendance
- Behaviour points
- Detentions
- Calendar
- Exams timetable
- Messages from the School

Please scan the QR code above or visit [mychildatschool.com](http://mychildatschool.com) to set up your account.  
Please contact the School, [MSS-reception@swale.at](mailto:MSS-reception@swale.at) should you have any queries or require assistance accessing this technology.

