

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear all,

I hope you have all been well during my brief absence whilst I took some paternity leave. As you can probably imagine, it has been a hectic (mostly nappy-filled!) few weeks for me, and whilst I genuinely loved every (*non-nappy-filled*) minute of my time off with my family, it is also wonderful to be back with you all and raring for another term!

I know that our students and staff have been just as busy in school. It has been great to catch up on what everyone has been up to and all of the great stuff our students have been involved in during the last few weeks. Lots coming up over the next three weeks of term, so plenty to update you on!

Cultural Capital *a message from Miss Hodd (Assistant Headteacher)*

SwaleStock - Tuesday 10th March

This Tuesday, Meopham School will be hosting the annual **SwaleStock** event.

This event brings together student performers from schools across **Swale Academies Trust** to showcase their skills and creativity. Our young musicians will experience the thrill of performing for a **live audience** using **professional equipment**, all while competing for various awards throughout the day.

To ensure our performers have the best possible atmosphere, our **Year 7 students** will have the special privilege of watching these live performances during **Period 5 and 6**. We are sure they will be inspired by the creativity and dedication on display from their peers across the Trust schools.

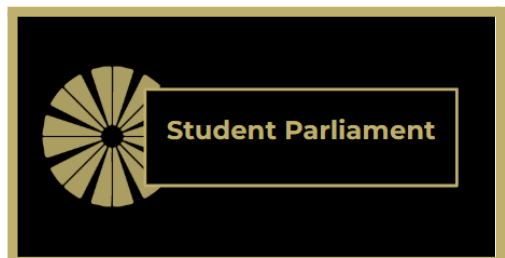
We look forward to celebrating the talent of our young performers on Tuesday.



Student Parliament Meeting - Wednesday 11th March

The next formal meeting for all our **Student MPs** will be taking place this **Wednesday, 11th March**, during **Period 1 and 2**.

All participating students must register with their Period 1 teacher before heading promptly to the **Dodmore Hall** for the briefing. More information





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For students can be found on the **Student Parliament Google Classroom**. We look forward to a productive morning of discussion and leadership.

Key Messages

Easter Holiday dates

We wanted to draw parents' attention to the fact that our Easter holiday dates, as set by Swale Academies Trust, are slightly out of sync with other schools in the area. The dates are set by the Trust Executive board, and we have no control over these. We would ask you to please check these dates, and ensure you are aware of any implications for your family.

Last day of Term 4 - Friday 27th March
First day of Term 5 - Monday 13th April

Year 10 Examinations - Mrs Romney; Deputy Headteacher

Year 10 will be completing their Trust examinations during Term 5. These have been pushed back by a week, providing an opportunity for effective preparation in class during the week beginning 13th April. The exams will now run from 20th April to 1st May. Further information will be provided by class teachers over the coming weeks.

Mr A Wood- Assistant Headteacher - KS3 Conduct and Welfare

My duty point, as you may see in the mornings, is to supervise the roundabout at the front of the school. I occasionally receive complaints from parents/carers regarding the one way system. The roundabout has been designed to support with the flow of traffic and it is a very serious hazard to stop on this roundabout. Therefore there is a drop off point behind the doctor's surgery which should be used by parents/carers. Our primary aim is to ensure the safety of students and users of our site. Please support us to make this area safer by using the areas provided, and following the signage in place.

"Hands Off" Policy - Mr A Wood- Assistant Headteacher - KS3 Conduct and Welfare

Please can you support us by explaining to your children that the school has a HANDS OFF policy. We as a school want to ensure these "small" contacts are not raising to bigger ones and leading to conduct issues. Thank you for your support with this.

Line Ups - Mrs H Davies-Lane: Assistant Headteacher - KS4 Conduct and Welfare

Last week we had the return of our uniform Line Ups as the weather has begun to improve. We will continue with this over the next few weeks as unfortunately some students' uniforms have slipped, but as always the majority look really smart in their Meopham uniform. A few things that we noticed last week were some students wearing trainers and not school shoes; sports branded socks and knee high socks; lots of earrings and necklaces which if seen will be confiscated and collected on Friday.

Students and parents have been made fully aware of our expectations and thank you for your support with this.

Headteacher Commendations - Miss Hodd (Assistant Headteacher)



Students who have demonstrated exceptional examples of our **TRUE values** and have nominated for **Headteacher Commendations** this week are:

Ausaja K (Year 12) - Excellent presentation on the policies of the Conservative Party in a Politics lesson last week.

Ras O & Lola S (Year 12) - Excellent presentation on the policies of the Liberal Democrats in Politics lesson last week.

Jagsirat K (Year 8) - Demonstrating excellent map skills in Geography.

Mercedes P (Year 7) & Sienna S (Year 8) - Excellent work as reception helpers last week.

Freddie L (Year 9) - Excellent demonstration of Tenacity in French.

Ivy E (Year 9) - Showing excellent leadership and group work when creating a routine in Dance.

Grace O (Year 9) - Demonstrating excellent group work to create an amazing Dance routine.

Will E (Year 9) - Working independently at home to explore watercolour Art techniques.

All students on this list will be invited to Headteacher Commendation on **Thursday at 12:30pm in Mr Roberts' office** for Dominos pizza and their certificates.

Teaching and Learning Tips - a message from Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Romney

As we move into the busier "exam season" of the spring term, I wanted to draw attention to the "Forgetting Curve". This is a scientific concept that shows how quickly we naturally lose information after learning it. Without practice, the human brain can forget up to 80% of new material within just a few days. This isn't a sign of a "bad memory"—it is simply how the brain works.

How do we try to address this in school?

Retrieval Practice: Every lesson begins with a short, low-stakes "Do Now" task. These tasks force students to pull information from their long term memory from last lesson, last week, and even last term. This "mental weightlifting" strengthens the memory and makes it easier to recall information during exams.

Spacing and Interleaving: We don't just teach a topic once and move on. Our curriculum is designed to revisit key concepts at increasing intervals, which interrupts the forgetting process and rebuilds knowledge stronger each time.

Deliberate Practice: Students are given 10 minutes of silent, focused time to practice their skills independently. This helps move knowledge from their short-term "working memory" into their long-term memory.

Our approach to learning is directly linked to our school's **TRUE** values:

Tenacity: Students show grit when they "struggle" to remember something. That struggle is exactly where the learning happens.

Excellence: By building these long-term habits now, students are setting themselves up for excellence in their summer assessments.



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How can you help at home?

You don't need to be an expert in the subject to help! You can support your child by:

Asking for a "Brain Dump": Give them a blank piece of paper and 5 minutes to write down everything they remember about a topic they studied today.

Using the "Parent Playbook": Encourage them to use the active revision strategies we've shared, such as flashcards and "blurting," rather than just re-reading their notes.

A message from Mrs Hartley, Senior Assistant Headteacher - Raising Standards and Sixth Form

Year 11

Year 11 are now fully back in lessons after their mock exams. The focus now is on the final push before the Summer exams, which start in May. Students will have begun looking at their responses from their mocks, and should begin planning in the key areas of focus. They should use their high impact revision strategies from lessons: testing themselves using flashcards, answering exam questions, or 'blurting'.

Interviews with students for entry to our 6th Form are continuing this week, and students will be informed of their interview slot. We are excited to meet the students to explore their next steps with us.

Countdown to the first exam (BTEC Information Technology): 53 days

Year 12

Our Year 12 students have recently completed their Work Experience programme, gaining first hand insight into the world of work. Placements were from a range of local businesses, education and healthcare sectors, offering students the opportunity to develop communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Employers praised their professionalism and enthusiasm throughout the week. This experience will support their upcoming applications for apprenticeships, university, and employment.

Year 13

Year 13 are also back into the full swing of lessons after their mock exams, and should be focussing on the high impact revision strategies they can implement all the way through to their exams, which start in May. Students should be using their study periods to prioritise revision on their focus areas, using exam papers to practice under timed conditions, and seek the support from their teachers if they need it.

Countdown to the first exam (BTEC Health and Social Care): 63 days

6th Form Football

The football matches are up and running in 6th Form, with the first game being played against St George's last week. Whilst the boys did not win, they showed great sportsmanship and enjoyment for the game and are looking forward to their next matches.

"Weekly Wins" Week 3

Active Recall - Spend 15 minutes each evening doing a 'blurting' session for a different subject each evening. Blurting is writing everything you know about a given topic on one page.

Moving Forward

As the weather begins to get a bit warmer and the mornings and evenings are lighter, it is always a wonderful time of year at Meopham where we can begin to truly appreciate the beautiful surroundings we are so fortunate to enjoy. Last week, we did manage to open up the fields at Lunchtime for our students, and hopefully if we can get another good spell of weather, we can keep this up. It is always wonderful to see students enjoying some time outside and getting the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air, and let's be honest, also burn off a bit of excess energy!

A core value of our school is Respect - and of course this includes respect for the environment within which we learn and work every day. As many of you know, being set in the countryside, we share our grounds with a number of night-time critters - such as moles, rabbits and a variety of different birds - so it is especially important that as a school community we keep our grounds pristine and litter-free. I thank our students for their support with this.

A huge thank you to Mrs Romney for doing a superb job as Acting Headteacher in my absence and also a big well done to the students involved in their edition of the parent/carer newsletter.

Speak to you next week,

Mr Roberts
Headteacher