

19th December 2023

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope that you and your families are looking forward to the Christmas break. At Outwood Academy Newbold we are ready for a fun-packed final week of education, celebrations and community events. The academy closes for Christmas on Friday 22nd December at 14:30.

My assembly this week has been based around the themes from Dickens' A Christmas Carol. We have explored what makes Christmas important, and what we should focus our energy on over the Christmas period. The heartache of Christmas 2020 when the government was required to unexpectedly put in place additional measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is no more than a distant memory in most people's minds. That Christmas, just 3 years ago, brought the importance of family, friends and companionship back to the forefront of our thoughts. Our children may not recall the significance of that Christmas, but I think for many adults it has shaped how we approach our planning for this year's festivities and will continue to do so for many years to come.

The academy has had two Christmas trees this year. The traditional tree in our student reception area is covered in the usual lights and decorations, and brings a smile to the face of Miss Gee every day as well as to the students who walk past throughout the day. There is also a "kindness Christmas tree" in the main academy hall. This tree is decorated with paper baubles filled with messages of thanks and love from different members of the academy community to others. Our students are generous in their thanks and never fail to make people feel valued and special. I offer my thanks to the parents and carers in our community who have brought-up their children to be such wonderful young people.

December is always a busy time in the academy calendar and this year has been no different. It was a privilege to welcome over 250 students and their families to the academy last week to receive awards for outstanding effort, achievement and improvement. These events are really special as it allows the community to come together and recognise just how wonderful our students are. This year we were able to enhance the festivities on the first event as our Post-16 student committee also hosted their Christmas market in the academy which allowed local businesses to sell their Christmas gifts and produce. Our students also carried out some fundraising that will be split equally between their prom fund and the Post-16 chosen charity for next year.

Over the last 2 weeks we have been running a number of different competitions including an attendance initiative and a celebration of our classroom champions. I have been delighted with the levels of attendance this

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academic year. We are now back to pre-Covid levels of attendance and are well on track to have the highest % attendance in the history of the academy. Again, I must thank you for your support in making sure that your sons and daughters attend the academy every day. The classroom champions initiative has been a real success this year. I am thrilled that parents and carers are now able to log onto the academy portal and read the comments that are left every day for students who have done well. There are currently over 28,000 positive comments recorded and this is likely to exceed 30,000 by the end of this week.

Mrs Jenkins, our Head of Performing Arts, refers to her department as “the heartbeat of the academy” and this is never more true than at Christmas. If you have been fortunate to be near the student entrance on a Wednesday morning in December then you will have heard a mixture of staff and students singing Christmas songs to welcome everyone to the academy. In addition to this we have had public performances from our choir, our Year 11 music students and a host of other talented students over the past few weeks. I hope that you were able to join us for the “Christmas Cracker” event this week as it gave the academy community an opportunity to come together and spend some time enjoying life with a cup of tea and a mince pie. I think that our Year 7 students would also identify their trip to the pantomime last week as a highlight of the year. This is the second time that we have taken students to the pantomime and I think that it is going to become a Newbold tradition over the coming years.

The release of our Praising Stars reports to students this week is a great way to end the term. We could not be more proud of the work that our students complete every day. They are driven and focused when it comes to learning. Our staff recognise how fortunate we are to serve this community and our students recognise how dedicated and skilled all of the adults that work at Outwood Academy Newbold are. Please spend some time this week talking to your sons and daughters about their report. There shouldn't be any surprising information in the reports but if there is anything that you would like to discuss then please contact the academy via the enquiries@newbold.outwood.com address so that the correct person can respond to your questions.

When you read A Christmas Carol you will be taken on a journey of redemption for a man, Scrooge, who has lost sight of what the importance of Christmas is. There is a lesser known character called Fred, Scrooge's nephew, who needs no reminder of how special Christmas is. He has very little in terms of money or status but he has bucketfuls of love and happiness in his household. I think we can all learn a lot from Fred when he says “Christmas is a kind, forgivable, charitable, pleasant time.”

If you are struggling over the Christmas holiday then there are lots of organisations within Chesterfield who are able to help. If you follow this [link](#) then you will be able to access the academy's mental health and wellbeing website which contains lots of information and links to people who can provide you with the support that you need.

I look forward to welcoming all of our students back into the academy on Monday 8th January ready to learn and ready to continue to be excellent human beings.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Southern