

Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

Heads Up!

Dear Parents and Carers

It seems an appropriate time, as we near Valentine's Day, to focus on love and all that it means. In the sense of February 14th, my own cynical view is that love has been cheapened and exploited by card shops and florists, who demand that we express our adulation in financial terms to express how much we love each other; I'm afraid it's not for me. Give me thoughtfulness every day rather than a grand gesture once a year: Simple acts of kindness – a hot cup of tea, your favourite sweet, running a bath – such pleasures and understanding of each other show far more love than the swipe of a debit card. Perhaps Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate, strikes this chord with her poem 'Valentine':



*Not a red rose or a satin heart.
I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.*

Her reasoning is that love is simple, ordinary and beautiful, but it will also make you weep; love hurts in equal measure. This notion of romantic love is perhaps better left for couples; but our love for each other, human being to human being is the foundation for a better world.

In recent times our newspapers and bulletins seem filled with hatred and despair; at times I find it hard to detach from such stories and they become the busy stream rippling through my subconscious in the early hours. Yesterday, a 5 year old child was found dead after his 'parents' made him run in the dark, in his underwear as punishment for wetting the bed. I call these people 'parents' loosely; there is no love here, and for me, the honour of parenting demands that one loves unconditionally above all else. The love between parent and child should be one of absolute trust; our children will make mistakes, they may make poor choices, but they must know that we will always love them and provide them with safety and kindness. Our role as parents is fraught with difficulty; to encourage our children to be brave and courageous in their ambitions, to show them that failure is part of learning, to teach them that there are consequences for their actions, to make them aware of the dangers life holds, whilst instilling curiosity and thirst for knowledge and finally, to teach them to love others. Children don't have to be scared into doing the right thing or fearful of telling the truth; they have to understand right from wrong and to feel loved enough to be able to move on.

I was once teaching 'Of Mice and Men' to a lively group of Year 11 students and we were debating the difference between power and authority. For me this is a crucial factor in teaching and leading learning. Gone are the days of the teacher who shouts to gain control, a verbose tirade of threats and demands. I had a few of these during my schooling; their lessons were silent, but I hated the subjects as a result. These teachers had power – a bigger voice and a god complex, but were probably quite lonely, and certainly had no respect. They ruled children through fear, with no care or consideration for the human beings sat in front of them. For me, the best learning happens where the relationship between teacher and student is one based on trust, and as a result the culture that you create is one of authority; an understanding that the adult in the room is there to help, to do their job, to support the learning, to treat the child as an individual with feelings that need nurture and kindness. In short; to teach with love.

Our school behaviours were chosen to remind each member of our community of the need for this: **Honesty – Kindness – Respect**. As a result the culture of our school has changed; the power of the relationships between staff and students have established the essential roots on which to grow great learning. I will let my friend John sign off today – have a great weekend and a safe and happy half term.

'Creating a truly great school takes patience. Ultimately, truly great schools don't suddenly exist. You grow great teachers first, who, in turn, grow a truly great school. A truly great school grows like an oak tree, not overnight like a mushroom. And to grow a truly great school love has to triumph over fear – this much I know for sure.'

John Tomsett, Headteacher, Huntington School.

Teaching & Learning

Focus on PE

Blood, Sweat and tears at JMS

It was cross country season over the last term, so of course, we would see the weather turn! House cross country, Vale cross country and the County cross country competitions all took place. It was also the term where the Year 10 rugby team would play in the county final, and JMS students would take part in martial arts.

House Cross Country

Cross Country saw some brilliant House competitions with students running to get into the best position to earn points for their House. Tom Wadsworth and Poppy Edwards both from Stert house won their races. James Behling (Stert) and Leah Nash (Thames) won their races in Year 8. In Year 9 Liam Antrobus (Ock) and Chessy McPherson (Thames) won in their races. And finally in Year 10 Harry Sampford and Maddie Wadsworth both in Stert House won their races. The overall winners with all the points added up were Thames with Ock second and Stert third. Well done Thames house for a great team effort to get you over the finishing line.

Vale and County Cross Country

Once again the students at JMS had to brave the conditions of the Radley College cross country course, and the weather that goes hand in hand with this competition. The JMS PE Department selected a team of 8 students in each competition from the results of the House competition, to enable the JMS students to have their strongest team. The Year 7 girls came second in the Vale competition with Poppy Edwards becoming Vale champ, a great achievement. The Year 10 boys also ran extremely well to come second in the county. There were also some brilliant runs by a number of students in the team who worked their socks off throughout the race.

A week later it was the County finals with the best runners in Oxfordshire competing against each other. JMS students had to run in even more difficult conditions, due to the rainfall the night before. The students showed great determination and resilience to complete their races. What a proud PE department we are to have such wonderful athletes.



Year 8/9 Boys team



Year 10 Girls team



Year 7 Team

Sky Sports for Living

This term also saw the Sky Sports for Living Project start. This was a project set up by me which gave the students an opportunity to work with a Great Britain athlete, Lesley Owusu and with Cando Martial Arts club in Abingdon. The project ran for 7 weeks seeing the students working as a team, learning new skills, and seeing what it takes to get to the top. The students spent the day with Lesley learning about what it took for her to get to where she is, and they took part in lots of activities to learn about their different skills. Later on that day they went down to the local martial arts dojo, Cando Martial Arts and learnt about lots of new skills lead by Ben Richardson and his team of ninjas. The students attended five more sessions after this working on different Martial arts, which taught all the students about co-ordination rhythm, memory and most of all team work.

Oxford German Network Social Event

'KNEIPENQUIZ' AT RADLEY COLLEGE

Year 12 and 13 took part in the annual Oxford German Network Kneipenquiz at Radley School on Tuesday 7th February. Firstly they had a 60 second 'introduce yourself to somebody you don't know' in German and then they teamed up with students from other schools for the quiz.

Our students spoke brilliant German and worked really well as part of different teams

from many other schools. 3 of our students were part of the winning team. A huge well done to all of you! I am very proud of you all!

Mrs Mannion



John Mason School
Excellence Through Creativity



Adventure Service Challenge

In the Autumn, students in Year 7, 8 and 9 began completing work towards achieving 'The Adventure Service Challenge' during tutor time. The ASC is a nationally recognised award offering a flexible scheme of activities for young people.

- Adventure – to see life as an adventure
- Service – concern for others, opportunities for giving help to those in need
- Challenge – progressive, training activities

It is helpful to view it as a foundation or preparation stage for Duke of Edinburgh Award. Students in Year 7 have been learning about the local environment and planted 180 bulbs around the school site, thanks to support from the JMA. We look forward to seeing the daffodils bloom in spring. Year 8 students have begun a programme on First Aid and Year 9 have been looking into Road craft and exploring the Highway Code.

One section of the award, 'Service' requires students to provide help to a family member. This is similar to the volunteering section of the DofE award. There are 2 service sections to complete across each level of the award. It is important to note that these should not be jobs that children are paid or rewarded to do and they should be something in addition to that which they do already.

Year 7 Spring Term Bronze Stage 1

Aim to complete some form of service for at least 6 hours over one month.

Cleaning their room, helping with cooking, setting or clearing the table, washing up. This could also include raising money for a charity.

Year 7 Summer Term Bronze Stage 2

Undertake a new service/helpfulness for at least 8 hours over 2 months

See examples above as well as reading to younger or older or disabled (e.g. blind or partially sighted) family member.

Year 8 Silver Stage 1

Give specific service for 10 hours over 3 months

Students may wish to choose a charity to support and complete activities over 3 months to raise money for that charity. They could also choose to support and elderly family member with chores, gardening etc. They could collect litter in the local environment.

Year 9 Silver Stage 2

Over a period of 5 Months give at least 12 hours of service such as

Doing household chores, raising money for charity, helping out at school, cleaning cars, gardening.

Tutors will be introducing this idea and helping students brainstorm possible ways to. As parents and carers you may be able to support your child with an opportunity to provide a service. Whilst we encourage challenging activities and opportunities for students to be involved in new experiences, we would urge that these should not put the student at risk or into situations that may be unsafe. Please ensure you discuss the tasks to be carried out with your child so that you can ensure you are happy with their safety.

Ms C Batcheldor

Coping With Self Harm

Self-harm

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. The intention is often to express their distress and/or to relieve unbearable tension. If you have concerns that your young person is self-harming you and your young person are not alone – it's impossible to say how many young people are self-harming but it's thought 13% of young people may try to hurt themselves on purpose at some point between the ages of 11-16 years. Treatment for people who self-harm usually involves seeing a clinician attached to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to discuss their thoughts and feelings, and how these affect their behaviour and wellbeing. They can also teach the young person coping strategies to help prevent further episodes of self-harm. Your young person can be referred to these services either by contacting your GP or seeking support from the School Health Nurse – jms.nurse@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk Please find the link below to access a parent's guide to self-harm.

[Coping With Self Harm](#).

Immunisations reminder

Year 11 will be receiving their Men ACWY vaccination on the 23rd February (1st Thursday back after half-term). Year 9 will be receiving their tetanus, diphtheria and polio (Td/IPV) booster & Men ACWY vaccination on the 28th February. Please can you ensure your young person returns their consent form to school as soon as possible even if you do not wish them to have it – thank you to those that have returned their forms, unfortunately I am still outstanding around 90 forms in total. Questions? Please email jms.nurse@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk

Options

Thank you to Year 8 parents and students for the prompt return of option forms. All choices will now be processed so that we can see where the clashes are, and which subjects, if any, are over or undersubscribed. I will be contacting parents after half term to let them know of any changes or issues, and counselling students where needed.

Year 9 option forms are due in on 20th February- the first day back after half term.

Mrs Munro, Deputy Headteacher

Community News

Tickets available on the door tonight for the Y7 JMA Valentines Quiz

On Friday 10th February between 7 and 9 pm, Year 7, in conjunction with the JMA, will be hosting a fabulous Valentine's-themed quiz night for members of staff and Year 7 students and their families/carers. Refreshments, including a licenced bar, will be available for purchase. All proceeds will go to JMS' JMA who provide so many essential resources for our school. It is guaranteed to be a fun-filled night with student acts to entertain you! Tickets are available to buy from Student Services and are priced as follows: £5 per adult, £3 per child, and £12 per family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). I look forward to seeing you there.

Miss Davies, Head of Year 7



Rotary Dragon Boat Festival - DB 2017 - Sunday 3rd September 2017 - Abingdon

Basic entry fee is held for 9th consecutive year with a generous Early Bird Discount!!

It is time to think about entering the annual Abingdon Vesper Rotary Dragon Boat Festival - DB 2017. We are delighted to announce that the Basic Entry Fee for DB 2017 has been held for the 9th consecutive year to £495!! If your entry form and entry fee reaches me no later than 30th April 2017, the fee is reduced by £45.

Last year there were changes to entry requirements and levels of entry in order to come into line with other Dragon Boat events. More detailed information including Entry Forms can be found on our website -

www.abingdondragonboats.org.uk.

Do not wait too long before entering. Website interest is stepping up already with many new enquiries from teams who have never previously entered. We look forward to a record number of teams again this year.

Dates for your Diary

AS Parents' Evening - Thursday 25th February held at Fitzharrys School

A2 Parents' Evening - Thursday 2nd March held at John Mason School

Year 10 Visual Arts mock exams - Monday 6th March to Friday 10th March 2017

Year 10 mock exams - Monday 13th March to Friday 17th March 2017

Summer GCSE 7 GCE Exams - Monday 15th May 2017 to Thursday 29th June 2017
