

Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

Heads Up!

'A Day to make a Difference.'

Dear Parents and Carers

This week's assembly has focused on 'Fear'; specifically that sweaty-palmed panic that sets in when we are afraid of looking foolish or stupid.

Remember the feeling when you had to read out your test score in class? Hiding behind clammy hands, you sit, willing the teacher to miss out your name and avoid the public humiliation. Be Still. Silent. Why is breathing so loud? Chairs creak, pages rustle their presence and the teacher, with metronomical precision, beats their alphabetical way to your name. You are Student Ninja, stealth learning under the radar so as not to provoke the attention of 'Sir'.

Fear manifests itself in a range of ways, as our brain fights hard to keep us feeling protected; fight, flight, freeze or flock? Fear is actually a safety mechanism, but when it comes to learning it is an impudent imposter, stopping young minds from being brave. What we must try to teach our children is that being scared is OK, in fact in the words of Doctor Who (my favourite programme, don't judge me):

'Let me tell you about scared. Your heart is beating so hard you can feel it through your hands. There's so much blood and oxygen pumping through your brain it's like rocket fuel. Right now you could run faster and you can fight harder. You can jump higher than ever in your life and you are so alert it's like you can slow down time.'

What's wrong with scared? Scared is a superpower! Your superpower!

The key to embracing this feeling is to have the knowledge to overcome our fear, take control of the tricky Amygdala which prompts such responses in the first place, somewhere deep in our fantastic brains. We must revise, learn, test; shuffle what we know and understand, organise it into the filing cabinets of our long term memory through repetition and application. This requires both revision technique and determination. I have shown our students the power of the brain in assembly – ask them who James Cook was, when he was born and what else they can tell you about his voyages – they learnt it in two minutes; they know they can.

So I have a challenge for you and your child. I believe that excellent results open doors and these results only come from great teaching and great learning. If your child dedicated one day, just that, 24 hours to make a difference to their life, think of what they could achieve. 24 hours of learning outside the classroom – at home revising and going over lessons, creating mind maps, flash cards, teaching you their newly acquired knowledge, attending extra lessons after school, working with friends and testing each other – they would conquer their fear, they would improve their learning and progress, they would embrace their superpower. The 24 hours can be split up into one hour slots or whatever you feel is best for your child, but it needs monitoring and keeping track of – on a wall, on the fridge – it's up to you and your child where this would be motivational. If every child, in every year group took 'a day to make a difference' for themselves they would be in control of their fear.

We will be speaking with our students about this and asking them to take part. Students in Year 10 have mocks coming up, Year 11, 12 and 13 obviously have public examinations in a matter of weeks, but actually ANY child would benefit from embedding their learning in this way.

I would love to hear from you if your family takes on this challenge and speak to your child after they have completed their 24 hours of learning. I believe that our minds have the capacity to do extraordinary things; let's see if it is true.



Have a great weekend,
Sarah Brinkley

Teaching & Learning

Focus on Soc Ed in Terms 3 and 4

Year 7

4 of the Y7 tutor groups have been following a pilot “Mindfulness” programme in conjunction with Oxford University. Mindfulness is described as.....

“a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique” Wikipedia 2017

Students are learning a variety of therapeutic techniques to develop their resilience, calmness and ability to cope with the demands placed upon them.

Learn more at <https://mindfulnessinschools.org>

Year 8

Year 8 groups have followed the “Step into NHS” competition format to develop knowledge of career pathways to allow them to make informed option choices. They supported this with online research on careers matched to their likes and dislikes (Casciad: Kudos), to their personality (iCould Buzz quiz) and accessed a large database of all possible career pathways (EClips)

Why not research your careers matches based on your personality?

Go to; <http://icould.com/buzz/> and take the quiz! No login required!!



Year 9

Year 9 have also been researching career pathways, to inform them for option choices. They are now starting an enterprise project to design and market their own trainers. They will form a small company, conduct market research and then design and market their own trainers making product decisions such as design, features, cost, promotion and finally price and quantity to “produce”. Then there is the all-important “pitch” to see if they can make a profit!!

Mr I Ferris, Head of Faculty

Dates for your Diary

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

Parents' Forum - Monday 20th March 2017 - 6pm in the LRC - topic will be feedback from our recent Ofsted inspection. The Ofsted report will go live next Wednesday 8th March.

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



JMS Second Hand School Uniform Sale

Do you have any spare uniform lying around? Would you like to donate your old school uniform to be resold?

If so, bring any items into school reception between the 6th and 29th March.

All items will be sold on Saturday 1st April 9am – 12am. All monies raised will be put towards outside seating for our students.

Thank you.

Community News



ABINGDON EAGLES BASKETBALL
Invincibility lies in the defence. Sun Tzu.

COMMUNITY SESSIONS

- Years 6-13 - Sat 9am-10am
Abingdon & Witney College OX14 1GG
£3 per hour PAYG
- Wheelchair basketball - Sun 10am-11am
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre OX4 6JL
£3 per hour PAYG

PRE-SEASON SQUAD TRAINING

- Years 7/8 - Thur 6pm-7:30pm
Didcot Girls School OX11 7AJ
£4 per session PAYG
- Years 9-13 - Fri 6pm-8pm
RAF Benson OX10 6AA
£5 per session PAYG

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