

## PARENT BULLETIN - Friday 2nd October 2020



Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly let me say thank you for your support around the decision we have made to remove our extended day for the next few months. Although it was a difficult decision, we are confident that it is the right thing to do, and comforted by the fact that our parents understand the reasons for it. Please see below for more information about what homework children should be doing and how to support them with it. This includes a helpful video for parents about how to self-quiz.

I would like to use this opportunity to address a couple of issues that have been raised by members of our community and which we are working hard to resolve:

- **Family Dining** - thank you for feedback about meals. Although we have received really positive feedback about many of the dishes, concerns have also been raised. We are aware that on several occasions, the quality of meals has not met the high standard we expect for either students or staff. There are many reasons for this (namely the temporary kitchen and Covid, which has forced individually portioned lunches and a very extended lunch duration) but we know that this has not been acceptable. We have been addressing this with our caterers to address these issues, but I am sure you will understand that these things cannot be fixed overnight. We have worked with the caterers to put together a new menu with more of the dishes that the children have enjoyed and we have also been assured that portion size will increase. The new menu (please find attached [Week 1](#), [Week 2](#) and [Week 3](#)) will start from Monday. Following this, we will be consulting with our student council to make any further changes. Thank you for your patience with this.
- **Responses to Messages** - as mentioned in a previous bulletin, the lack of broadband internet on site is creating significant issues for our office team who are working flat-out in very difficult circumstances. We operate a internet-based telephone system so this method of communication is also severely affected. Normally, we are able to respond to almost all messages the same day but at the moment there may, unfortunately, be delays to the response times to parent enquiries. *We would ask parents to read the parent bulletin carefully each week (archived bulletins are also on the website) for key information about the school, before contacting the office.* At the moment, the vast majority of messages we are receiving relate to information that has already been in the bulletin - this would allow more time for the team to respond to individual queries.

Ms Wood

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### **Information**

#### **Changed School Timings - Monday 5th October**

- **Timings** - From Monday 5th October, school will finish at 3.40pm every day. If you have signed up for homework club, you will have received an email to confirm arrangements. Homework club will finish at 4.35pm.
- **Self-Quizzing** - students will be expected to work on their homework at home. This is largely self-quizzing. We have spent this week re-teaching them how to do this and reminding them of expectations. Quiz booklets will be checked on a Wednesday week A and students will be sanctioned if they have not completed all the quizzes up to the previous week. [Here is a video](#)

[about how to self-quiz](#) - this will be a good reminder for students as well as helpful for parents wanting to support their children with their study.

### **Annual Flu Vaccination - Year 7 ONLY**

The primary school flu vaccination programme is being extended for year 7s this year. Please find attached a [letter](#) regarding your child's flu vaccination. If you would like your child to receive a vaccination you will need to complete the Consent Form, via the link below, so your child can receive their Flu Vaccination. This link will cease to work 2 working days before the session.

- **Session Date - Wednesday 2nd December 2020**

To access the online consent form, please click on the following link:

<https://www.oxfordhealthimms.co.uk/forms/flu>

### **Reporting Student Absence**

A reminder that the school office needs to be informed **each day of a child's absence** from school as soon as possible in the morning.

Our preferred method of communicating student absence is email as it helps make sure we get all the accurate information and can easily get back in contact:

- Parents should email [office@theswanschool.org.uk](mailto:office@theswanschool.org.uk) including ABSENCE in the title of the email.
- Email/message needs to state child's full name and tutor, and why the child is off, particularly if they have suspected Covid or another infectious disease
- If the child is off due to [Covid symptoms](#) then the parents need to arrange a Covid test and get a negative test result before the child comes back to school. The school will provide home learning resources and a chromebook while the student is off school.

Parents still have the option to telephone the school and leave a message if they have no access to email.

### **ParentMail and MyChildAtSchool**

We are pleased to inform you that the technical issues with parentmail have now been resolved and we shall be organising for Year 7 children to have access to the till system next week. Can we please ask that you pay for lunches in advance (£13 per week). You should also make a payment to the [Dinner Top Up](#) account if you wish your child to purchase breakfast or break time snacks. Please do email [office@theswanschool.org.uk](mailto:office@theswanschool.org.uk) if you have any queries.

### **SwanComm**

SwanComm is the group that enables parents, carers and teachers to meet and discuss matters concerning the wider school community. Our aims are to support the school and to develop a community focused around it.

The next SwanComm meeting is on Monday 5th October at 7.30pm on Zoom. It is open to all parents and carers. Please come and join us.

The Zoom meeting details are:

<https://github.zoom.us/j/97529503671?pwd=bzIEUHhEcUNMeWN3TVU5S3JhbzRSZz09>

Meeting ID: 975 2950 3671

Passcode: 199144

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## **Reminders**

### **Water Bottles**

Please can you make sure that your child has their own labelled water bottle with them. This is vital as children are not permitted (due to Covid) to use water fountains in the normal way. So far we have been handing out plastic bottles of mineral water to children but this is both expensive for the school and bad for the environment. If this continued, we may be forced to have to charge for these, which of course we do not want to do.

### **School Uniform/PE Kit**

Please remind your child to make sure that they have a pair of school shoes with them on days when they have PE. This is so that we can ensure that mud from the field does not come into the building - can we also ask that plastic bags are sent in with your child for them to place dirty shoes into. Students have been reminded of this and will be sanctioned if they do not have their school shoes.

### **Cycle Helmets and High Visibility Items**

It is great to see so many of our students cycling to school - we have nearly 50% of them doing so! Please can you remind your children that they do need to wear a cycle helmet and high visibility items to keep them safe - this is especially important as it starts to get dark earlier in the evening. Students are welcome to wear a high vis/reflective coat as an alternative to their plain, dark one if they are cycling to school.

### **Free School Meals**

A reminder for any new or existing parents who think they may qualify for Free School Meals, please submit a request via our [website](#). This will ensure that you do not have to pay for lunches, and also means that the school can receive additional funding.

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## **Enrichment**

### **Library News**

Many congratulations to all the Year 8s who took part in the summer holiday reading challenge. First prize went to Rosie Joyce, who read and recorded an amazing 32 books, and second prize went to Catriona Porter. Both girls were awarded a brand new book of their choice (kindly donated by Blackwells Bookshop).

This week we were delighted to launch our brand new collection of 30 super-readable and quick reads by well-regarded children's authors ranging from Malorie Blackman to Frank Cottrell Boyce.

The week beginning 5th October is **National Libraries Week**. At the Swan, our aim is for every student to join and use their local Library as well as the school one. Nearly all of the city's Libraries have now reopened, including Summertown, Headington and the large central Library in the Westgate (check their current opening hours online). It's really easy for your child to join the Library - you can do this online and this gives you access to ebooks as well as to hard copy books. To join the Library, follow the instructions at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/using-library/join-library>

Any student who finds me in the Library next week to tell me which local Library they belong to will receive a stamp in their planner.

Books of the week (beginning 5th October) are *Passing for White*, a dyslexia-friendly historical novel about an escaping slave, by Carnegie medal winner Tanya Landman; and *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe - a tale of adventure and survival (this edition is introduced by Bear Grylls!), one of the very earliest novels in the English language.

Dr Tessa Roynon, School

Librarian

### Useful websites / apps for learning French

Duolingo and Quizlet are free apps that will help a lot with learning French and retaining vocabulary.

- **Duolingo** - Please encourage your child to join our Swan classes on Duolingo. Instructions are below:
  - *From a computer:*
    - Year 7 students <http://duolingo.com/o/smdbuj>
    - Year 8 students <http://duolingo.com/o/yqxkkv>
  - *From a phone or tablet:*
    1. Download the Duolingo app and open it up.
    2. Press Get Started. Then select French.
    3. Set your Daily Goal and continue (you can change this later).
    4. Create a Profile: On Android, press the menu icon at the top right corner and press Create a Profile. On iOS, press Profile in the top left corner and press Create a Profile.
    5. Type in your Name, Email and Password, then press Create.
    6. Go to your Profile and press Progress Sharing.
    7. Type in your Classroom Code; for Year 7: SMDBUJ ; for Year 8: YQXKKV
    8. Press Join Class.
- **Quizlet**
  - Year 8 students are already using Quizlet. Please ask your child to talk to Ms McCoy if they are not part of the Quizlet class yet.
  - For Year 7 students, invitations to join our Quizlet French classes have been sent on Google Classroom.

### 5K Club

After the success of students running in lockdown, starting on the 5th October a fun-run 5k club will start after school each Monday with Mr MacNaughton. All abilities welcome. We will meet at 3.50 at the entrance to the sports block, and the session will last between 30-45 mins. No need to register, just come along if you're keen! Sports kit required (doesn't need to be Swan PE Kit), but students must wear their uniform as usual during the day and get changed

### Fantasy football

For the 2020/21 Fantasy Premier League why don't you join our mini-league "TheSwanSchool"? Joining the league couldn't be easier. Simply use the link below and you'll be added automatically after you've entered the game. <https://fantasy.premierleague.com/leagues/auto-join/de1vx0>

- **League Code: de1vx0**

Looking forward to playing against you this season!

Mr MacNaughton, Deputy Headteacher

### **Family Learning**

I am delighted to let parents know that we have been offered free spaces on a variety of English and Maths courses designed to boost parents' confidence in supporting their child's learning. These Family Learning courses will be delivered by Tony Payne, an experienced teacher at Abingdon and Witney College. Just some of the courses on offer are: Keeping up with the children in English (five 2-hour sessions), Keeping up with the children in maths (five 2-hour sessions), ESOL class (English for speakers of other languages) (up to ten 2-hour sessions). To sign up or for more information, please contact Tony Payne by email:

[tony.payne@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:tony.payne@abingdon-witney.ac.uk).

### **Instrumental Lessons**

We are looking to see if any parents would be interested in their child learning the flute in school. We are on the waiting list for a flute teacher from the Oxford Music Service, but we are looking for a couple more students to sign up. If your child would like to try learning the flute, register your interest with the Oxford Music Service [here](#). Instruments can also be hired from the Oxford Music Service.

A reminder that we currently offer the following instruments in school: piano, guitar, drums, violin and brass. If you would be interested in your child learning any of these instruments, please contact me directly at [katrina.playford@theswanschool.org.uk](mailto:katrina.playford@theswanschool.org.uk).

Mrs Playford, Head of Performance

### **Speech & Drama at The Swan School**

As well as private instrumental lessons, we also have a private Speech & Drama teacher at The Swan School.

Speech & Drama lessons are taught in small groups of 3-6, offering pupils a focused environment to develop acting skills to a high level and build confidence in speaking and presentation skills. Pupils learn and perform as a small ensemble, taking a Trinity drama exam at the end of the academic year, offering the best balance between individual responsibility and teamwork, encountering a broad range of dramatic literature along the way. Classes are held during the school day on a Tuesday, with pupils coming out of academic lessons for 30 minutes per week on a rotating timetable. Please note that capacity for these sessions is limited. £180 per term (10 sessions). Classes are taught by visiting theatre director Robin Colyer. Email for details and signup: [robin@flintlocktheatre.com](mailto:robin@flintlocktheatre.com)

Robin Colyer, Speech & Drama teacher

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### **Key Dates:**

- Virtual Open Evening - Wednesday 7th October
- Progress Check Afternoon - Thursday 15th October
- Half Term - Thursday 22nd October - Friday 30th October
- Data and Planning Day - Friday 4th December
- Parent Day - Wednesday 9th December
- End of Term - Thursday 17th December