

26 April 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome back to another busy term and I hope that you and your family had a restful Easter Break. We hope that your sons and daughters are well rested and ready for the challenges of the summer term.

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THE EXCELLENT ACADEMIC STANDARDS achieved by our students. This is the result of placing great teaching, learning and assessment at the heart of everything we do. We were delighted, therefore, to see that our recent DfE/RSC visit reinforces our evaluation of the teaching, learning and progress that is being made.

The success of Astor College is not just in its examination results, it is also in the emphasis placed on education of the “whole” person, so imperative in preparing our young people for the future. We place great emphasis on performance and participation in sport, art, drama, dance, music and community service. We seek to develop confidence and character in our students and support them in developing their talents and interests in all aspects of school life. Whilst this has been a comparatively short spring term, Astor students have achieved an outstanding amount as you will see from this newsletter.

Once again, at this time of year, our attention is focussed on supporting our students in their preparation for final examinations. Year 11 students have thoroughly scrutinized the results of the indicative examinations they sat in December and have created exacting revision plans to help them through the coming months. They have accessed numerous revision classes and mentoring sessions and in early March sat further indicative papers to hone their examination skills. There were a number of revision sessions attended during the Easter holiday and these will have also supported your child with preparation for the exams they will sit. Period 6 sessions will continue for Year 11 students this term and we ask for your continued support to ensure that your son or daughter makes use of these extremely useful and beneficial extra sessions.

Astor is renowned for its enviable activities programme and the abundant opportunities that exist for its students. During last term we saw exceptional performances from our students in drama, dance, music, public speaking and CCF as well as sporting events. In February packed audiences thoroughly enjoyed our 2018 production of DNA. We were also pleased to welcome other schools from Kent to the performance which is part of their GCSE course and they took the opportunity to watch a live performance. We also held auditions for our Autumn show this year and to say we were blown away by the level of talent would be an understatement. Over 50 students from across all year groups have been cast for “Our House” which is testament to the level of talent we have at Astor College. I know they are already working hard in rehearsals and I wish them all

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the very best going forward.

In mid-March we held the annual Primary Dance Festival which included 13 primary schools, 200 performers and over 500 audience members. Once again it was a very special event and a huge thank you goes out to all those who made the event such a success.

The Music Department were asked to support the Big Reveal Music Festival held at the Town Hall. The students who attended were, as always, a credit to themselves and a real credit to the College.

I am also delighted to inform you that Francis Ajiginni, a Year 12 student, represented the College at a public speaking competition held at CAT's in Canterbury. Francis was the overall winner of the North East Public Speaking Competition beating numerous other schools in the process.

I am also proud to inform you that the Employability group of students in the 6th Form raised funds for the Pilgrims Hospice through car washing for a day. The Hospice were extremely pleased by their efforts and wrote to say *"On behalf of Pilgrims hospice I would like to thank you for supporting the students and bringing them to the hospice, and thank you to the students for their hard work and interest in the hospice. We are truly touched by their efforts."*

Success in sport continues and the commitment and support that is shown throughout all the teams who compete is testament to the desire and determination they have to be successful and they should be commended for all that they give to the College.

The CCF goes from strength to strength and the opportunities for those who have signed up for the Cadre or Cadets are ever growing due to the willingness and commitment of the staff and volunteers who run this aspect of the College. The cadets have been involved in so much since our return in January and they have collectively and individually benefitted from the programmes that are on offer to them.

We are very fortunate that our school is situated in such a beautiful location and we constantly strive to maintain our estate and buildings to the highest standards. Each term we are submitting various bids to try and source funding that will enable us to modify and update areas of the College to enhance the aesthetic feel of the site but also improve the provisions within the classrooms. To support us with these steps the newly formed PTA have begun to fund raise and I hope over the coming months and years you will support them with the various activities and fundraising events they will organise. Please look out for the ParentMail communications or visit our new website where the PTA will have an area to keep you informed of their plans.

As in previous years I would also like to inform you that we will be changing the timings of the day from the middle of this term to accommodate the examinations that the Year 11 and sixth form students will be undertaking. The main change is that lunch will

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move to 12.15pm with 2 lessons in the afternoon. The beginning and end of the day timings will remain the same. This change will be for a period of 4 weeks only and the students will be informed by tutors and staff when it is implemented.

I am delighted to inform you that we have booked a school ski trip to PILA, Italy for March 2020. This will be the first Ski Trip by Astor College for many years and the organising team are excited to be able to once again provide the students with this great opportunity. Further detail will be made available to the students to bring home but should you be interested then please contact Mrs Blackman clare.blackman@astor.dfamat.com who will be able to provide more detail to you. The initial deposit is £75.00 and is due by the 28 June 2018. We have 49 places available so it will be a first come first serve basis and if necessary we will then open a waiting list.

As we move into the summer term and planning begins for the next academic year I would like to inform you of a change to the uniform that will be introduced from this September for Years 7 – 11 (the 6th form uniform will remain as per our current policy). This communication is to give you advance warning of this change and to ensure that if you are buying items of school uniform between now and the start of the new academic year that you are aware of the new requirements.

The change is being introduced to improve the current standard of uniform being worn by students in the school, particularly by our female students, and to ensure that we have a cost effective, smart uniform that is followed consistently by **all** of our student body. There are currently too many of our students taking too wide an interpretation of what constitutes acceptable black school trousers and from my conversations with several parents I am keen to eliminate any potential ambiguity on this, especially relating to students wearing black jeans style trousers to school.

This change will ensure smarter standards of appearance from our students and crucially will mean that valuable staff time is not spent dealing with issues relating to problems with school uniform. From conversations with parents I know many of you will welcome the clarity over what constitutes the correct uniform and where to purchase this.

The change we are making is that we are introducing standardised school trousers and a standardised school skirt as part of our school uniform. These items can be purchased from Channel Uniform our school supplier.

Channel Uniforms: Radnor Chambers, Cheriton Pl, Folkestone CT20 2BB

Telephone: 01303 487075

Email: channeluniforms@live.co.uk

Website: www.channeluniforms.co.uk

The trousers will come in a range of sizes and leg lengths to suit the varying needs of our students. There will be two styles of trousers available to choose from with a slim

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leg and bootleg style available for our female students, and a slim leg and straight leg style for male students. These trousers will have the Astor Logo embroidered on them either just below the waistband or above the pocket. There is a skirt available for female students and again this comes in differing sizes and lengths to ensure that this is available to the required **knee length**. The skirt will also have the school Logo embroidered on it just below the waistband.

I hope the advance notice of this new requirement will enable you to plan your uniform purchases for the new academic year and I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation in this matter and for your support of the standards we wish to uphold at Astor College.

I would like to remind you of our NO PHONE policy and that we will continue to confiscate phones if used during the day at College. We continue to have numerous phones confiscated each day and this had led to some very difficult conversations by our receptionist and office staff with you as parents. I would like to remind you that they are not the ones who deal with the punishments and confiscations so I would politely ask that should you have an issue surrounding mobile phones to direct it to the year team and not the office or reception staff.

Finally, we sadly said goodbye to Mrs Lawrence at the end of last term as she has moved to another school. Those students who were taught by Mrs Lawrence have had a change of timetable in most instances and these lessons will be taught by either one of the current maths department or the specialist Maths teacher Mr Cross who we have employed until the end of term. I am sure that your son or daughter will not be affected in any way by these changes as Mrs Williams the Head of Maths has carefully looked at each class affected by Mrs Lawrence's departure.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the term ahead and for those who have students undertaking examinations I wish them every success over this term.

Yours faithfully

Mr L Kane
Principal

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