



The Clere School

The Clere School
Earlstone Common
Burghclere
Newbury
RG20 9HP

Our Ref: RM/VB

24th May 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

For me, it is always important to reflect on why we do what we do. As the Headteacher of The Clere it is my vision that **everyone in our community is challenged and supported to succeed and flourish now and in the future**. This is what drives the school values of **Community, Integrity** and **Respect**.

After 30 years in education, I have become deeply aware of the rhythms and flow of a school year. There are important milestones and events that happen every year and form part of our life in schools. This was massively disrupted for schools and students during the pandemic, and it is fantastic to see a return to normal. At the moment we are seeing a key one of these with the Year 11s completing their final GCSE exams. We have had a totally understandable range of emotions and nerves, but I have been immensely proud of how our students have conducted themselves. One of our new invigilators, who has worked at another local school, commented on how our students were the best she has worked with. It has also been great to talk to the Year 11s as they came out of their exams who have told me that they “smashed it”, “it was much better than I thought” and “what we covered in revision sessions came up, it was great”. These comments are due to the hard work that both students and staff have put in. We are now looking forward to them keeping the momentum going after half term and then celebrating at our annual Prom. Another of these key events is at the other end of our school life as we welcome our new Year 7s for September. We have already had a very successful welcome evening and are looking forward to having them onsite for the induction days.

Partnership is so important for a school to be successful, and I would like to thank the many of you who took the time to complete the parental survey. Thank you for raising many positive things that you feel about the school and for the concerns or areas of improvement that we need to focus upon. I know that parents are concerned about the times where staff absence means that students do not have their regular timetabled teacher in front of them for the day. We work incredibly hard to minimise the impact of when this happens and we have contracted supply teachers to ensure a level of consistency for students with staff who are embedded within our school community and are fully on board with our ethos and practices. There were also suggestions about ensuring students feel a sense of **community** through their house. To do this we are going to run three competitions based around the school values. The first will be based upon **community** where students will receive points for participating in **extra-curricular** activities. The second is around **respect** where we will have a **house competition** on **attendance** where students will be awarded points for having **100 % attendance** during a week. The final one will be about **integrity**. The points here will be awarded to students

who arrive at school with the **correct uniform**. Obviously, students will be awarded house points for other things in school and will all contribute to the presentation of the cups and awards in our end of year assembly.

Some parents also raised some concerns about behaviour. As a **community** we do have some members who make poor decisions at times, and we will hold them accountable for this and put in the necessary sanctions and restorative practice. Our **school vision** and **values** are clear, and I make no apologies for having high standards and those who are part of our **community**.

I also wanted to reassure parents over an incident that occurred and has been discussed in the wider community. The incident involved someone entering the school in an inappropriate way. Having reviewed the incident, the person on-site was challenged and dealt with by a member of staff in under a minute. We have also contacted the appropriate authorities to make sure that the necessary actions are taken regarding this. It is illegal to enter a school site without permission and we are vigorously pursuing the correct outcome. Please can I remind all parents and carers that they must report to reception and wait for the person that they are visiting to collect them.

Perception of behaviour can also be important. I was lucky enough to interview, with the Chair of Governors, for a new potential governor. He does not have a child of school age and attended a very different type of school as a child so hadn't really experienced a comprehensive secondary school. As part of the process, I walked him around the school at lunchtime and he commented on how **positive and polite our students were** and the fact that they had a **fantastic relationship with the staff**. He said it was an atmosphere that he would have liked at school. It really did make me proud to be part of this **community**. This was also validated by the external Hampshire Inspectorate and Advisory Service who regularly visit the school and look at all aspects of what we do.

I would like to remind parents that I run a **Headteacher's surgery after school on Wednesday afternoons and evenings**, where you can **book an appointment** to meet with me to raise any issues that you have. I would also like to extend an invitation to any parent who wishes to walk around the school with me during a school day to also contact the school to make an appointment with my PA. You are such a vital and integral part of our community, and this school is as much yours as it is the staff and students.

As with all my messages I would like to **celebrate** some of the many successes and activities that have occurred. On the sporting front the school's **rounders teams** are in full swing, no pun intended. I had the pleasure of taking the Year 10s to their tournament where they came second amongst local schools. The **cricketers** are getting ready for their tournament and I'm sure that they will smash it out of the park, this time the pun is very much intended. We have also had a very wet and cold **district athletics** for Years 9 and 10. There were two things that stood out for me which was nearly a quarter of the students in these 2 year groups participated and that we received 9 letters inviting our students to the **County Finals** after half term.

It has also been fantastic to go down to the music rooms on a Friday after school to listen the Jazz Band. This comprises of staff and students coming together to interpret some true modern classics. I'm looking forward to their first public performance. Also in the Performing Arts our students are getting ready for the summer performance of Shrek the musical. What is superb about this is the lead our Year 11s have taken in casting and directing this show.

I wish you all a good, and hopefully sunny half term and look forward to continuing to work with this very special community for the final half term of the year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Milner', written in a cursive style.

Mr R Milner
Headteacher