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Dear Parents/Carers,

Celebrating school life - welling up in Welling.

The weeks have flown by but I hope you have kept up with our activities through our newsletter. This week's newsletter has been carried over to next week for our Open Days Special Edition so it gives me a small window to say a few things.

Some of you will remember the squash and overcrowding of open evenings and open mornings in the past. With the pandemic ongoing, we felt we had to restrict numbers for face to face events which are now permitted by the guidance so we decided not to hold an evening where the numbers are unmanageable but to run three open mornings with two sessions on each, thus, effectively, six open mornings that parents of year 6 students could book online. We opened the booking yesterday at about 10.30 am on our website and within two hours, 420 families had booked all the available slots! We have since added slots to allow closer to 600 families to visit next week.

Our extra-curricular activities are well and truly back to pre-Covid levels. We had House Sports last week and on Wednesday afternoon I was privileged to be one of the judges for House Music. Picture our darkened school hall, lit for each performance by lights of the house colour. Each house had a time limit in which to perform two pieces on the theme of musicals, one instrumental and one choral. Twenty or thirty students from each house, from little year 7 students to full-grown year 13 students worked together, led by the sixth form house prefects, to perform, remarkably, their own arrangements of various musical items. Some schools are lucky to have one student who can play the trombone - one house had three in its line up! Mrs Bono (examinations officer and lay judge with me) and I turned to each other after the first performance, which was also the winning one in the end (Collins) and confessed that we had been very moved - we were welling up in Welling! I realised, more than ever, just how much we have missed these cross-year group events which bring out the very best in our students, their talent (intellect), their collaboration (empathy) and their performance (courage).

What else this week?

We celebrate sixth form students, Lora Stancheva, Leila Thaifa, Bianca Daniele, Mayukhi Panda, Christabel Masaba and Francesca Adeloje, who have been accepted on to the Empowered Females in STEM Programme which received almost 600 applications for only 150 places. "They demonstrated a

notable passion for STEM and an impressive commitment to their future” and we hope to hear more from them in due course.

Max Dawkins (year 11 last year) successfully became an Arkwright Scholar (engineering), sponsored by the Kobler Trust. And former student, Colina Archie-Pierce, is not only a busy medical student but also exhibited (and sold!) her artwork at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition - a true embodiment of the breadth and depth of our curriculum of which we boast!

We had our first Geography field trip of the year today and we are looking forward to the change in routine that the Power Day on Monday will bring as we explore PSHCE themes in more detail.

Covid-19 update

May I remind you to:

1. **Support your child's twice-weekly testing, and**
2. **Be alert to symptoms in your child and do not allow your child to come to school if there is any suspicion that they have the virus.**

We now have a date on which Covid-19 vaccinations for 12-15 year olds will be offered - Friday 12th November. We will write again with advice and information about these vaccinations in the week before half term, once the flu vaccinations are out of the way.

Also, please remember that our **half term break in October includes Friday 22nd October and Monday 1st November**, a day either side of the main holiday week.

Finally, **please do not use our car parks for pick up and drop off** unless your child has mobility issues or you have arranged to collect them because they are ill. A few thoughtless drivers can create a dangerous traffic situation while hundreds of students, and indeed primary school pupils and their parents, are crossing those car park entrances as pedestrians.

In my previous letter I commented on how good it was to be doing whole year group assemblies again. Now we can once again celebrate the vibrancy of the rich life of the school that we have missed for so long.

Best wishes,



Steve Elphick

cc. Sixth form students