

February 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the February newsletter from Testwood Sports College. What happened to January? It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through 2015/16 and I am pleased to say the vast majority of the students have been attending well, dressing appropriately and working hard to make rapid progress across the board in their subjects. During the half term holiday, it may be time to remind them of the priorities of homework, uniform and the need to meet their attendance and punctuality targets. Thank you for your support with this matter.

May I draw your attention to the **Data Collection Sheet which is attached to this newsletter**. We collect this information on a regular basis and ask that you return it even if nothing has changed on the form. Tutors will be collecting them in and are asked to get 100% return rates. There are occasions when adults change their mobile phone numbers or even cease to have home telephone numbers. It is critical that we have the most up to date means of contacting parents because in the event of a health problem, we want to be able to contact you as quickly as possible. We also request that you insert your home and work email addresses. Many of the teachers would be able to keep you more up to date with progress. It is efficient and often saves us interrupting you at work if we can send information via email. Obviously, in the event of an illness, we would still contact you by telephone or mobile phone.

- Check all contact details are correct with up to date numbers for all named contacts
- Check ethnicity information is included and accurate
- Add email addresses for each contact person – home and work if possible

We would be very grateful for your support in this matter. I have asked Tutors to check with the students if forms do not come back by the 26th February.

Although the period between Christmas and half term was only six weeks, Testwood students managed to achieve a significant amount.

Sports

The spring term began with an excellent start. The Under 16 boys' hockey continued with their winning streak and became New Forest Champions. The tournament, held at Priestlands School, saw strong opposition, but with a win against Noadswood, the team were confident in their performance. Players' player were Daniel Brackstone and Jack Stuttard. The Under 13 boys' Table Tennis team also had excellent success, winning at the New Forest tournament. The team consisted of four Year 7 players, who beat a strong side from Applemore in the final. Congratulations to Tommy Brammer, Reece Scammell, Ryan Carty and Keane Fee.

Gifted and Talented Students

There are a group of Year 10 Gifted and Talented students, Madison Bell, Boston-Rose Wyatt and Ciaran Simpkin, who travelled to Warwick University to be part of the Big Deal project. The project is aimed at supporting a pupil's opportunity to attend university. The pupils were at the university for two days, where they learnt skills from budgeting to presenting. They also have to complete weekly tasks before developing a business plan and product design. At the end of the weekly tasks, Madison, Boston-Rose and Ciaran will return to Warwick University, where they will present their business proposal. If the team place in the top two, they will present their business plan to professionals at The Shard.

IBM Visit

A team of six Year 8 students were involved in a range of challenges designed to make them think and solve complex problems at IBM Hursley. Instead of thinking strictly about the end product or solution the team, which consisted of Holly Bennett, Kasey Simpkin, Laura Howard, Ella Clewer, Kate Lemon and Connor Nordvik, were actively told to ask 'why?' with their approach to each challenge.

The day, using the name Bright Sparks, pitted schools across Hampshire against each other with five separate challenges to be completed. Amongst the challenges completed, the 'Hackberry' activity required the students to figure out how to connect a box of electronics together, gain access to a code using card swipes, decipher the code, access a safe code on a computer and then open the safe. 'Twitterdrone' required the students to work out the required instructions to control a drone around a course, with stunts thrown in for good measure (#backflip) and to then send those instructions in the form of a tweet.

The level of competition was strong, with only twelve points separating the top five schools. Testwood came a very strong third place and only missed top spot by six points, so well done to the team!

The Year 10 team of students (Max Carpenter, James Ward, Alex Robinson, Millie Webb, Daniel McLaren and Thomas Melville) will be taking part in a similar set of challenges at IBM Hursley on Wednesday 10th February.



On Monday 1st February, Professor Averil MacDonald visited Testwood and ran special sessions with some of our girls. The first session, called 'People Like Me,' helped them identify the types of people whose personalities match their own. This gave them

suggestions as to which type of jobs they might like and be good at. Would you believe in less than an hour we discovered Testwood has potential Investigators, Communicators, Developers and Entrepreneurs, who perhaps one day will find great careers in Science, Technology and Engineering. In the second session, Professor MacDonald led a debate for our first ever Café Psy regarding our energy needs and 'Fracking'. It was held in the LRC, café style with drinks and nibbles, as an opportunity for intelligent conversation and discussion. Café Psy is run by our Gifted and Talented coordinator, but open to all who are interested, with the next event on the 3rd March led by someone who has worked first hand with refugees in the area.

Art Exhibition

We are very proud of our Testwood Art students who are currently exhibiting their artwork at Hanger Farm. The Exhibition is located in the foyer and gallery space and will be open to the public until 26th February. Do go along and have a look if you can.



Self-Injury Awareness Day (SIAD) – 1st March

During week commencing the 29th February, Testwood Sports College is supporting SIAD. Students will be selling hot chocolate and homemade cookies, cakes and fudge, as well as wrist bands to raise awareness of the difficulties some young people face and the help they need during adolescence. We are working with Youth and Family Matters to provide signposting to additional support. We will establish a display board in the LRC along with a 'drop box' for young people's enquiries. If you would be able to support this by sending in any contributions of an edible or financial nature, they would be greatly appreciated.

Risky Behaviour

Whilst most parents and guardians will have no need to mention the following matters to their sons and daughters, I would like to remind everyone we take a very firm line on risky behaviour in and out of school. Certain items are banned on school site. Smoking materials or electronic vaping paraphernalia will be confiscated and only returned to adults. Anyone caught using or possessing smoking items face sanctions, which become more serious for repeat offenders. Research shows that the use of electronic gadgets can often encourage young people to try 'the real thing' later. Please support us to help our youngsters avoid the risk not only for health reasons but for possible exclusion too.

As the year progresses, students keep growing and certain items of uniform may cease to fit. Please check footwear, skirts and trousers during the holiday and ensure sons and daughters are properly equipped. The uniform list is on the website and also printed inside the Planner to assist. Do not hesitate to contact the Progress Leader or the Tutor if there are difficulties with this matter.

Sainsbury's Active Kids

If you shop in Sainsbury's or buy petrol there, please collect the school vouchers, as they are a massive support to the PE department with delivering excellent lessons. Please take any vouchers to the school reception. The vouchers equate to the purchasing of new sporting equipment for Testwood students to use. In previous years, we have been lucky to purchase rounders bats, footballs and whistles, to name but a few.

Rock Challenge

On Thursday 11th February, the Rock Challenge leaders are hosting a fundraising event in the school hall, 7-9pm. The purpose of this is to raise money for props, set and costumes for this years' Rock Challenge event.

The Rock Challenge event is to be held on Monday 22nd February at Southampton Guildhall. The performance will begin at 7pm and tickets can be purchased directly from the Guildhall box office. Extra rehearsals will take place during half term on Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th February from 10am-3pm. We wish all of the participants the best of luck with this annual event.

Non-Uniform Day

Friday 18th March will be a non- uniform day to raise money for Sports Relief. Students will be asked to contribute £1 and are encouraged to wear sports clothes and something red.

Finally, may I give you advance notice of the Testwood Sports College forthcoming production of Little Shop of Horrors. Tickets will be going on sale after half term. The performances are on 12th-14th April. We look forward to seeing you there.

May I remind you that once we return from the half term break, there is only four weeks and four days until we break up for Easter! We will finish at 1pm on Thursday 24th March and return on Tuesday 12th April, as Monday 11th April is an **Inset day**. Please also be aware that there will be a Year 8 Parents' Information Evening on 3rd March from 6pm – 7.30pm and a Year 10 Parents' Evening on 17th March from 4.30pm – 7.30pm.

May I wish you all a restful half term break.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Pitman
Headteacher