

14 February 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Many of you will have seen the recently published information about school performance. I am delighted to confirm that Weald of Kent students achieved a progress score of +0.95 in their GCSE examinations of August 2019. This means that, on average across their subjects, they have achieved a full grade higher than students with similar prior attainment across the country. Not to be outdone, our Year 13 cohort who left in the summer achieved a Sixth Form progress score of +0.12 meaning that they have also achieved well above the national average. This is a fantastic achievement and highlights the persistence and hard work of our students, the dedication of staff, as well as the support and guidance from parents and carers.

Annex developments at Sevenoaks

Following the announcement of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys' proposal to introduce a satellite of their school at Sevenoaks, a number of concerns have been raised by existing and prospective Weald of Kent parents and carers in respect of the buildings and possible sharing of facilities.

The main concern is that if facilities such as the main entrances, dining areas, hall, office space and Sixth Form study are shared, it will impact on the effective operation of the Weald annex and the learning experience of our students.

To address these concerns, we have worked closely with Kent County Council and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys and I can now provide you with an update on plans for the site. Kent County Council have been receptive to our requests and the latest designs provided to us include the separation of all facilities listed above, without impacting in any material way on the floor space we currently have and will be taking up in future.

As it stands, we cannot circulate the plans more widely, as they are being refined prior to being shared in a pre-planning consultation later this year. However, we are confident the final plans will address the various concerns that have been raised. In addition, Kent County Council are working to ensure each provider on the site has sufficient circulation space and access to sports pitches. We will update you further as things progress on that front.

Communications Forum

Once again, thank you to all of the parents and carers who gave up their time to attend the regular Communications Forum. We spoke about changes to the arrangements for consultation evenings, particularly the introduction of phone consultations, arranged if parents and carers are unable to meet with a particular member of staff. The groups felt that this was a positive addition and would mitigate the challenge that school faces in ensuring enough appointments within the time available for consultations.

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We also spoke about our new data reports, which was really helpful as it has enabled us to look at the specific language we use in reports. Hopefully, these changes will help remove any confusion. This was mostly in relation to a lack of clarity where students were making expected progress. The report says “making”, the suggestion was that we should include “expected progress” to the statement moving forward. The data team are checking that we are able to use more than one word in those fields of the reports.

There was also a very pertinent question about managing student use of mobile phones at home. Our advice is that parents and carers must be in charge of access to the internet and the use of mobile devices. Do not allow students to have their phones in their bedrooms, you have no idea who they are invited into your home and their lives via social media. Clear limits to screen time should be set and shared with students. Openness is the key to safe use of the internet and social media. If you would like any additional support in relation to this, please contact our student services team who will be happy to work with you.

Kirkland Rowell

Every few years, we take the school’s temperature using Kirkland Rowell. They conduct whole school surveys and allow us to identify areas both that are working really well and areas we need to develop. The surveys will be coming out after half term. It is a paper-based system and we really do value the feedback that we get so we would appreciate your participation. All responses are anonymous. Students and staff will also be completing the survey in school so that all voices are heard.

Staffing news

Dave Hopkins has retired today after 19 years’ service to the school. He is a well-respected and valued member of the weald community who has positively impacted on the experience of all of us. Staff and trustees had the opportunity to wish him well today, and I know that many of you will miss his presence in the school. We hope that he enjoys his well-deserved retirement. I know he is looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren.

We are in the process of recruiting staff to join our team for September, as the annex grows so does our staff body. I will be able to update you later in the year on this.

Weald Health Day

We took a collective pause and deep breath two weeks ago for our Weald Health Day. Students heard from mental health practitioners, learned some first aid, explored how mindfulness can support mental health and participated in group Pilates sessions. Feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive. In addition, it allowed us the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of speaking about mental health as well as physical health and to challenge some of society’s taboos around this issue.

Quiz Night

A massive thank you to the PTA for another fantastic quiz night. I won’t mention that the staff team won the evening! An amazing £1,863.80 was raised. These funds are used to support and develop the facilities that we have in school and make a big difference.

Good news stories you might have missed

The start of term saw our cross-country team claim the best-ever finish for Weald of Kent at the 24th Girls’ Knole Run. They finished a breathless third in the tough race. Read more: <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/best-ever-knole-finish-for-weald-team>

Swimmers from the school nabbed seven medals at a championship in Margate <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/swimmers-seven-medal-haul>, while the Under-16 table tennis team battled their way to victory after winning a Kent Schools event in late January <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/table-tennis-girls-win-tournament>.

Also in action this term were our cricketers, the Under-13 and Under-15 teams both did well at the Lady Taverner's tournament <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/under-13-cricketers-at-sevenoaks>.

Meanwhile, next month four Weald girls are set to represent the school at the national final of Top of the Bench – after outdoing schools from across the south east in the regional part of the competition. It will see young scientists, two from Year 9, one year 10 and one Year 11 do their level best to overcome a series of chemistry-related problems at the University of East London.

Green issues have never been so topical, so it was perfect timing by Weald of Kent's Eco Group to do their bit for the planet and plant 50 trees on a crisp winter morning at the Tonbridge Campus: <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/mist-opportunity-for-weald-eco-group>

As you can see, we have packed a lot into this very short term! I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable half term. We look forward to seeing the students on Monday 24 February.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs E Bone
Headteacher

Parents and Carers Bulletin and Upcoming Events – Term 4, Week commencing Monday 24 February 2020

This week:

- **Monday 24 February** – deadline for completed Year 9 options forms (deferred from Monday 17 February)
- **Monday 24 February** – Year 9 Ski Trip Information Evening, Main Hall Tonbridge Campus
- **Monday 24 February** - U13 Netball Squad Training, Tonbridge Campus
- **Tuesday 25 February** – Year 7 Consultation Evening, Tonbridge Campus
- **Tuesday 25 February** - U13 Netball Fixture, Tonbridge Campus (after school)
- **Tuesday 25 February** - U15 Hockey match vs TGS, TGS (after school)
- **Wednesday 26 February** - GCSE & A Level Trampolining Competition at Bennett Memorial School (after school)
- **Thursday 27 February** – U13 County Netball Tournament, Rainham School for Girls
- **Friday 28 February** - Bracken Cup XC Race at The Schools, Somerhill (12.40pm onwards)

Coming up:

- **Monday 2 March** - Year 10 to 13 Drama Trip, EM Foster Theatre
- **Tuesday 3 March** – Year 7 Consultation Evening, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Campuses
- **Wednesday 4 March** – A Level Media Study Day, South Bank

Term dates:

Monday 24 February	First day of Term 4
Friday 3 April	Last day of Term 4 (own clothes day – suggested voluntary donation £2) early finish – students will be offsite by 12:30
Monday 20 April	First day of Term 5
Friday 22 May	Last day of Term 5
Monday 1 June	First day of Term 6
Wednesday 22 July	Last day of Term 6 (own clothes day – suggested voluntary donation £2) early finish – students will be offsite by 12:30