

21 July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

We come to the end of another year, one which has seen less disruption than the previous two, but sadly we were still hit by COVID which caused some disruption to 'service as usual' both in the Autumn and Spring Terms. I am sure that we are all very much hoping that next year will run smoothly and without disruption on that count. Staying on the subject of disruption, we have also had two red weather alerts – one for wind and one for heat. To be honest, I'm all up for a year free of writing and considering risk assessments for extreme events – here's hoping!

### **Curriculum Enrichment events and activities**

This term has had a flourish of additional activities for students to enhance the curriculum and bring the school community together. I am most grateful to the staff for organising and giving of their time for these events.

The term kicked off with Earth Week, organised by Ms Chappell and her Climate Emergency Committee. The Tuesday of that week Year 7 were off timetable for the day taking part in a range of activities and the Friday was Green Day, where students were encouraged to come to school dressed in green on a non-uniform day. Ms Chappell has also been busy with her student team this term setting up a school allotment.

Mr Jenkins has organised two Science trips (Physics) to Thorpe Park, one for the whole of Year 9 and one for Year 10. It was wonderful to be waving off coaches of excited students (and staff) after what seems such a long break from school trips.

Mrs Ward and Mr Craig organised a Year 8 Biology/Geography trip to Colchester Zoo in July to investigate biomes and the adaptations of plants and animals first hand.

On Thursday May 26<sup>th</sup> Miss Howard organised for OM Consultancy - Annie and Sue (trained school nurses) – to come into school to deliver whole year group sessions in the hall to years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Year 7 had an introduction to puberty, Year 8 an introduction to sexual health, Year 9 an introduction to relationships and consent, Y10 an introduction to healthy relationships and sexual harassment; finally there was staff training after school on dealing with sexual harassment in schools. This training was particularly pertinent with the Everyone's Invited website, but also with the safeguarding advice that we should now assume that it is happening here and we need to know about it and how to deal with it.

Year 10 had a Careers Day for Year 10 on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Year 10 were off timetable all day. Sessions were run by external providers.

In Creative Arts, we had Stour Valley's Got Talent on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Students performed an assortment of acts from singing to cello solos, dance, magic and Monty Python sketches. It has been lovely seeing students get excited about the prospect of performing to a live audience again. We are all very much looking forward to our first whole school production since 2019 next Spring – students will be auditioning for parts in Grease in September.



Miss Stewart-Hogg, a Drama trainee has been leading Drama Club this term, and attendance has been consistent with students enjoying a range of fun drama activities. Mrs Hutchinson, our new head of Music who joined us at Easter, has been supporting students at lunchtimes and after school with a variety of music pieces.

Miss Duffy has arranged two opportunities for students to experience live theatre: a trip to Bury's Theatre Royal to see 'The Bone Sparrow', a play inspired by the real stories of asylum seekers experiences of refugee camps. And in June Year 6 and Year 7 watched 'The Lies You Tell', brought to us here at SVCS by Hightide Theatre Company, which explored themes around mental health, well-being, and the importance of truth and speaking up when things aren't right. This performance is being followed up for all students with a drama workshop delivered by the Theatre Royal exploring these themes further.

After the success of Activities afternoons last year, SVCS did it again this half term, and much fun was had by all.

Sports Day took place earlier this month and was a roaring success and the PE staff have continued to offer clubs and take students to fixtures throughout the summer term.

### **A PTA at Stour Valley**

SVCS have finally gained momentum to get a PTA set up to help us with fundraising.

With funds already raised from two successful events earlier this year (80s night and medium evening) this has been the catalyst to move on with forming a PTA and support whole school projects. Alongside staff Ms Chappell and Mrs Kemp there has already been discussion about funding for water butts and a polytunnel for the school allotment. The school's green project is an example of the sort of project the PTA wish to support but there are endless other possibilities that the PTA could help fund – events, equipment, student activities – and the PTA are keen to hear from parents and students with their ideas for projects where funding is needed. Together the collective aim will be to enhance students' time at Stour Valley Community School.

The PTA are still looking to fill some key positions and would welcome more parent support, if you feel able.

### **Staffing Changes**

This academic year has seen more SVCS staff leaving, changes to contracts and new appointments than is usual for SVCS. I am delighted to be able to report that we made some excellent appointments this term as a result.

Mr Essex, teacher of Maths, is leaving us to focus on his successful and expanding chocolate brownie business. The field of Maths teacher applicants was strong and we found a way to appoint two full time qualified Maths teachers to replace him from September. Miss Tompkins and Mr Hudson.

Mrs Ward, our 2<sup>nd</sup> in Science, is relocating to Staffordshire, and we have appointed Mr Morris from September, as our new second in Science.

Miss Stewart, our SENDCO, has secured a promoted position at the Paxman Academy in Colchester from September, and we have appointed Mrs Chester as our new SENDCO. She has resigned her position as Year Leader from September but will continue to temporarily hold onto the Subject Lead for RS position until we can appoint a replacement, which we hope to do from January 2023.

Mr Leppard has also resigned his Year Leader position from September to focus on his Head of PE role, boosting extra-curricular PE and the new KS4 qualification being introduced from September, BTEC Sport. Mr Lee, current Head of Year 11, will pick up this year group for their final year.



We have appointed Mr Mansfield to replace Mrs Chester as Head of Y9 (from September) and Mr Prendergast will become the Year 8 Head of Year from September. We have also recruited to a new position to support the pastoral team, a Student Support Officer, Mrs Morey. She started on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

Mr Spalding has resigned his Faculty Leader for English position and he will work three days per week as an English teacher from September. Mrs Gill has been promoted to English Faculty Leader from September. Mrs Savage, teacher of English and History, has got a new job in a specialist setting and we have replaced her with Mrs Cooper, who will start with us in September as a teacher of English and History.

Mrs Huck will join us in September as a part-time teacher of Girls' PE.

Mrs Mayes, Head of Art, returned from Maternity Leave on 18<sup>th</sup> July and Mrs Tibbles, who has been covering the Maternity Leave will revert to her technician role. Mrs Tibbles will also be employed as a Learning Support Assistant two days a week from September. We say thank you and goodbye to Mrs Leake, who has been ably covering the technician role.

Mr Boulden has been teaching Maths this year and he will leave us at the end of the year but continue to help us out as a supply teacher when required.

Mrs Bevan, Learning Support Assistant, will be retiring at the end of this year.

I am sure you will join me in wishing all the staff leaving a fond farewell and we look forward to welcoming our new staff in September.

### **SVCS and SVET Values**

Throughout the Spring Term and part of the summer term students, staff, governors and trustees were consulted on what our stated school values should be. The Values Committee that formed after the consultation have now finalised the values, and they work so well for the whole community:

### **Be Kind, Be Brave, Be Ambitious, Collaborate.**

I am using the end of summer term assemblies to launch these to the student body and I have met with a company who specialise in signage to agree how to display these values around the school building and on the websites.

### **Student Voice at SVCS**

Student Voice has been key to a number of new developments at SVCS this year.

The Ethics Committee is coordinated by Miss Howard (Subject Leader of PSHE). Among other things, they have produced, in collaboration with the wider student body, the SVCS Code of Ethics. This is a set of rules that students have chosen for us to hold each other accountable to. This can now be seen displayed on the wall in the Heartspace. The group have also conducted various student/parent surveys and raised awareness of issues in assemblies.

Too-Too: The Ethics Committee's survey into Sexual Harassment in school was a direct response to 'Everyone's Invited'. It did reveal that there are issues that are currently going unreported. By way of response to this, the senior team has worked closely with the Ethics Committee to find a solution to the issue of people being disinclined to come forward when they have concerns. 'Too-Too', is an anonymous safeguarding reporting platform was launched to students in assemblies during the week commencing 13/06/2022. All students have a personalised login and can use the service to communicate any concerns that they have directly to school staff.

Policy making: There has been a conscious effort this year to involve students in the process of writing and updating policies, with their ideas being included where appropriate. For example, the updated Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy includes wording that was suggested by students, who were also consulted to enshrine the 'Code of Ethics' within the school's Behaviour Policy.



Student Committees: Groups such as the Ethics Committee, the Climate Emergency Committee (CEC), and Charity Council have a high profile within the school, with students able to freely voice their views and concerns, and events such as 'Green Day' and 'Earth Week' promoting these causes.

### **GCSE Results this summer**

Happily, face-to-face results day is back.

Year 11 students can collect their statements of results from school on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August. They will be available from 9am to 10:30am and staff will be available in school that day to answer any questions the students may have. If a student is unable to collect their statement of results, we can arrange to have it posted. We require a large stamped addressed envelope with a signed covering letter/email from the student giving us permission to post their results. A representative can collect the results on the day, but permission must be given by the student via letter/email and the representative must bring proof of ID.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable summer break. Students return to school in full uniform on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

With kind regards

Mrs Rachel Kelly  
Headteacher

