

20th July 2022

Dear parents/carers,

Re: End of year updates

As we close the academic year, I thought it was a good time to update you on a few key things and take a little time to recognize and celebrate some of the many things that have been happening at John O'Gaunt.

Thank you

Firstly however, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to every member of the school community. Staff at JOG work exceptionally hard and devote themselves to providing and caring for our students. I am privileged to work alongside them in this endeavour and always grateful for their professionalism and dedication. However, without the support of families, there is a limit to what we can do alone. Your support for the school is a vital part of being able to give the very best we can to every individual in our care. Thank you then, for the many ways that you support the school.

I am also, of course, extremely thankful to our students. It has been a challenging year for all of us once again. The school community has had to endure yet more uncertainty and disruption from the pandemic and elsewhere, but JOG students are very special young people indeed. They have risen to every challenge, hurdle and difficulty and have faced them with admirable resilience and spirit. Every day we witness something among our students that inspires us and reminds all of us why we do what we do, and I am so proud of them.

Staffing

With Covid hopefully something we are learning to live with, many schools have experienced a turnover of staff. At JOG we have seen some staff movement too and we will be saying goodbye to several colleagues and welcoming new ones too. Therefore, we bid farewell to Miss Mitchell, Miss Heraud, Miss Hunter, Mr Hammond, Mrs Wakeham-Thomas, Miss Barnes, Mrs Terry, Mrs Adjiri and Mrs Parsons. We send them on their way with heavy hearts but our best wishes and thanks.

We welcome:

- Mrs Chaddock – Faculty Leader for Humanities
- Mrs Bainbrigg – Faculty Leader for Visual Arts
- Mr Lewis – Faculty Leader for Maths and Computing
- Mrs White – Progress Leader and teacher of Drama/English
- Mr Hiller-Culley – Teacher of Science
- Miss Bonner – Teacher of French
- Mr Higgins – Teacher of PE
- Mr Eifler – Teacher of Maths
- Mr Milton – Teacher of Maths
- Mr McShane – Teacher of Computing
- Mr Voss – Teacher of Geography
- Miss Lamb – Teaching Assistant
- Miss Lawson-Sanchez – Teaching Assistant
- Miss Lawrence – Teaching Assistant
- Mrs Wheeler – Teaching Assistant

I am also delighted to confirm that Mrs Quigley, Mr McKeivitt and Mr Harper also recently accepted permanent posts at the school. They have all added so much already and we're extremely pleased to secure them for the longer term

Start of Term 1

The new academic year for students starts on Monday 5th September 2022. This is a normal school day and all students are asked to report to school for the usual start time of 8.45am and staff will be available to greet students as they arrive. All students will spend a short time with their Tutor to receive important information and they will be in normal lessons from Period 2 onwards. The school day will end at the usual time of 3.10pm. For those who use it, school transport will run as normal.

Uniform

Clearly, the recent weather has led us to relax our usual uniform policy. However, John O'Gaunt remains a uniform school. Our dress code is not negotiable. We want students to attend school dressed professionally and appropriately for the business of education, as well as feel a sense of community and shared identity alongside their peers. Please support us by visiting the [uniform page](#) of our website and study our [uniform policy](#) carefully, and ensure your child arrives equipped and wearing the appropriate uniform correctly. We use both rewards and sanctions to encourage students to wear their uniform correctly. We are assured that our suppliers have stock available.

Conduct

In response to staff, student and parent feedback, we are making a few changes to our rewards and sanctions system next academic year. We want to continue celebrating and rewarding the many positives we see every day, whilst also ensuring that we continue to have a clear, consistent and responsive system to tackle and prevent poor conduct. At the start of the new term, we will be writing to you with the details of the changes we are making.

As I stated above, the school is limited in what it can achieve unless we have your support. To this end, I would appreciate your assistance in reminding your children of our high expectations and reiterate your support for us in this. The less time staff need to spend dealing with low-level poor conduct, the better children learn and progress; it really is as simple as that.

A few highlights

Even though we are a relatively small school, there are so many things that happen that give cause to celebrate that it's hard to keep up. I asked staff for just a few highlights to share with you in celebration for now, and I've included these at the end of this letter. I hope that you enjoy reading them and if we've missed something your child has been involved in, please be assured that it isn't intentional, there's just too much to include all of it!

Finally, it just remains for me to wish you and your family a restful, enjoyable and safe summer holiday. We look forward to seeing you and your children when we return.

Yours sincerely,



Mr R Hawthorne
Head of School

Highlights

English:

- Well done to all the Year 10 students that have presented their English Language NEA presentations this term. We have had a diverse range of interesting topics and it has been brilliant to watch the students talk confidently to their peers.

Science:

- We had a great time taking part in Visual Arts week! Mrs Melvin-Chick worked with Year 7, helping them to produce something that would enable them to distil clean water when stuck on an island and Mrs Keeley-Green worked with Miss Barnes' Year 10 Art class to produce some artwork using live bacteria. It was new to both teachers, but some amazing work was produced!

Maths:

- Massive Congratulations goes to Harry who got a Merit in the UKMT Kangaroo challenge and Gold in the Junior Challenge, Cameron who got a Gold in the Junior challenge and to all who got a medal or participated in the challenge. We are so proud of them all!

Humanities:

- **Year 9 History:** Had a fantastic visit to the Imperial War Museum, London. 50 students visited the museum exploring the incredible exhibits, from the Harrier to the V2 rocket. We even had a competition for students where they had to share three objects from the museum that interested them most.
- **Year 10 Geography:** This is the first year since the COVID pandemic that fieldwork returns to GCSE Geography. 45 Year 10 Geography students completed a physical geography investigation in Bowdown Woods, Thatcham, and a human geography investigation in Victoria Park, Newbury. It was great to see them get stuck in and experience a much missed part of learning the subject.
- **History Scale Model Club:** Across the year, dozens of students have come to the scale model club to either learn scale modelling for the first time or develop their existing skills. Students completed many brilliant models in the process, from the Titanic to the Hawk T1 (the aircraft flown by the Red Arrows). The following students joined the club at the beginning of the year and have persevered throughout with several brilliant models: Alice, Harry, Isaac, Tasha and Piper.
- **Year 7 Churches walking tour of Hungerford:** Year 7's enjoyed a walking tour of three of the churches in Hungerford – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Hungerford Methodist Church and St Lawrence's Church Hungerford. Each place of worship focussed on different aspects of the Christian faith, and students recorded their drawings and questions in a work booklet. They also wrote thank you letters and were complimented on their excellent behaviour.
Rev. Mike Saunders said *'I was so encouraged and was almost moved to tears! Please can we do the same next year?'* High praise indeed and well done to all the students.

PE:

- This year finally saw sports fixtures return after nearly 2 years. The revamped West Berkshire Schools extra-curricular programme introduced several festivals to our calendar, which focused on participation rather than competition, we all felt these were a great success! This year students have had the opportunity to represent the school in over 10 different sports, from traditional sports such as Netball and Football to some different sports such as Handball and Dodgeball. We have been amazed with the enthusiasm from our students with some representing the school in all the sports that have been on offer to them. We have seen well over 140 students represent the school this year, which is over a third of our cohort and an amazing achievement! We look forward to increasing our offer of extra-curricular activities next year and seeing even more students playing sport for fun!

Visual Arts:

- The highlight of the term has to be the Visual Arts Week! It was simply amazing. There were loads of events from bubble printing workshops, cupcake making, a Year 10 trip to Benchmark Furniture, a *fiercely* competitive staff bake-off competition, a STEAM Day (ably assisted by our brilliant Interns) and a harder-than-ever Treasure Hunt (Ed: it really was hard this year!). Faculties across the school all contributed across the week in what was truly a cross-curricular event, and the students showed their leadership qualities and creativity in so many ways.

Year Groups:

- **Year 10:** Miss Eggbeer wanted to highlight that Year 10s have been competing in a tutor challenge for the past term; every Monday the tutor group with the least behaviour points, most positive points and best attendance received a reward. The overall winner of the challenge was 10C; well done to everyone who stepped up.
- **Years 8/9:** Mr Harper would like to celebrate the welcome that our students have given those who have joined us during this academic year. Whether they have come from a foreign country, different county or just a local school, the children have welcomed them into the JOG family and helped them settle and feel a place of belonging. The children who have joined us have only strengthened and helped us improve as we continue to strive forward and raise the bar.
- **Year 7:** Miss Harris told us that the Year 7's have impressed us greatly this year! They have displayed their ability to adapt to a new school environment, settle in quickly and have shown an outstanding work ethic. They are positive, personable, and polite. As a progress leader and as a staff we are very proud of them!

Careers:

- **Work Shadowing:** 340 students enjoyed a fantastic two-day placement in the workplace recently. Their jobs ranged from being in an office, on a farm, to working with the RNLI. Two quotes from the students we'd like to particularly highlight are:
 - *'On Thursday, I went to a studio and learnt how to use audio editing software and how to make a website. I then compiled a playlist and learnt how to use the soundboard and the mic set ups, as well as how to take a call when on air. On Friday, I ran two live radio shows'*
 - *'Throughout the two days of work experience I was located at the RNLI centre in Poole. I was working in the repair and maintenance workshop, working as a mechanic, and fixing the boats ready to be sent out for work again. I learned a lot of new things about the engines that I didn't already know. I really enjoyed my 2 days there and want to apply for an apprenticeship.'*
- **Enterprise:** In school, students who were unable to go out on a formal work shadowing placement completed an entrepreneurial project called the 'Chocolate Bar Challenge' where they pitched ideas to create a new brand, and worked as a team to enhance their team work skills. One student told us: *'Each year group had a competition on making a chocolate bar wrapper with a new brand of chocolate. The group I was in didn't win but we all put effort into the plans and the final product, we also made an advert with Mr Harper in it. We all learnt we had to be patient and work in a group to get to the final product.'*
- **Work Experience Preparation:** Students enjoyed a day working with different business employers, learning about themselves through questionnaires and quizzes, interview skills, CV writing and quizzing the employer. It was a great day in preparation for life outside school.

Some other highlights:

- **All Aboard - Sovereign Housing:** Year 7 have enjoyed entertaining the 30 members of 'All Aboard', a community group in Hungerford. They served a two-course lunch with tea/coffee to them, prepared by our resident cook, Donna, and then retired to the library with them, entertaining them with board games and chat and each enjoying hearing about the other person's life. Students really enjoyed it and one told us; *'It was lovely to meet them and hear about their lives' and 'I don't have grandparents, so it is like having one for a day!'*

- Eco Club:** Our wonderful Eco Club students have been awarded a coveted Green Flag Award from Eco-Schools England for JOG, for their environmental and community efforts! This is an extraordinary achievement for a Secondary School. Eco-Schools praised the 'mature and professional approach of the students and the responsibilities they each take from minute taking, to following up agreed actions, accountability, monitoring and evaluation'.

They also noted how the students' concerns and interest was encouraged and supported by staff and incorporated further into the curriculum. The Student Leadership Group has been an inspiration to them, too. They also said: *'We love that your students have taken their great work beyond the school gates and into their local community and we thought your Eco-Code (created, debated and discussed by the students) was brilliant!'* Very well done to all involved.
- Foodbank Friday:** Students rose to the challenge last Friday to help those less fortunate than themselves and filled **15 crates** for West Berks Foodbank. This will help those families in need over the summer holidays and we are so proud of them and their families for their generous and very much needed support.
- SLG@SLT:** In addition to their great work throughout the year, our Student Leadership Group (SLG) met with all the members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) earlier this term. The purpose of the meeting was to follow-up on a student survey that SLG had led on three areas – school environment, equalities and diversity and advice and guidance around careers and options. It was a 'Question Time' style affair, and our student leaders did themselves proud, presenting their findings and asking some important questions for leaders. It has led to much discussion and some action in response already and further details will be coming out in the Autumn Term. Well done Student Leaders!

There have been many other news stories over the year. You can find an archive of them [here](#) or follow us on Twitter to stay up to date [@jog_school](#)