



15th March 2019

Dear parents and carers,

Northamptonshire Police Knife Arch Event

Thank you to parents who have contacted me with feedback regarding this event - and I hope that this may be my final communication on the matter. It is probably fair to say that a range of views have been expressed, from the extremely positive, to expression of annoyance at the long wait in the cold. A fair summary would be that there is support for the initiative, but that we need to look at the practical and logistical side of things with the police when we run this again. We will of course undertake a careful evaluation to ensure that we learn any practical lessons from this. I do apologise to students for the long delays to pass through the arch.

However, we do remain totally committed to partnership work with Northamptonshire Police and our responsibility to engage with social and current issues of concern. We also believe in trialling new ways of promoting discussion on these topics and I know that this is appreciated by many students and families.

National Apprenticeship Fair

Over 127 students from Years 11 - 13 attended the National Apprenticeship Fair during this week. The event was held at Milton Keynes Arena and gave our students the opportunity to discover more about the wide variety of apprenticeships that are now available in many industries. Initial feedback has been incredibly positive, with students considering degree apprenticeships, future site visits and a range of apprenticeships in previously unimagined areas such as logistics and design. Thanks to all students who represented Wollaston School so admirably and we look forward to learning of the next stages in their careers!

Irchester School Science Project

One of the most important benefits of establishing the Nene Valley Partnership with partner primary schools, is the enhanced educational opportunities that we will be able to offer children at all three schools. This long-running science project has been held in partnership with Irchester Community Primary School and the excellent Lab 13 provision and this year, as part of British Science Week, we hosted a STEM fair based around the "squashed tomato challenge". The brief to students was to devise and build a method for safely transporting tomatoes over a distance of one metre without any damage.

The event was organised and run by Mr Sheldrick, with the assistance of four of our excellent students from the school Science Club, Archie Reeves, Tom Lambeth, Alex Price and Anthony Fryer. All four students represented the school exceptionally not only getting the main hall ready for the event but also judging guiding and participating in the various challenges.

Mr Sheldrick commented *"Approximately 40 students attended the event and it was a fantastic day. It was a pleasure to witness the enthusiasm of the students and the inventiveness of their creations. I would like to extend my thanks to all those, both staff and students, who contributed to making the day such a success"*.

Comic Relief 2019

We decided against a non-uniform day for Comic Relief as this followed so quickly on the heels of the Sixth Form RAG week non-uniform day. However, lots of fundraising activities have been taking place in order to support this national charity. These included the sale of red noses, a cake sale, a house bingo competition and a staff versus Sixth Form basketball match. I will include details of the amounts raised and the result of the basketball match in next week's letter.

Year 12 Parents' Evening

Thank you to staff, parents and students for a highly productive Year 12 subject consultation evening. Reports were of useful and positive conversations, with plenty of praise given for great starts to Post-16 study and a few concrete actions for improvement where this is required to help students achieve all they are capable of. We have a Year 12 cohort who are capable of achieving wonderful things, both academically and in terms of their personal development. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with parents and students to ensure that this potential comes to fruition in the end of Year 12 examinations and assessments.

Partner Primary Schools Hockey Tournament

On 6th March 2019, we were proud to host teams from five local primary schools to compete in a 'Quick Sticks' hockey festival. The event was run by our Year 12 Community Leaders as well as our wonderful Year 8 Sports Leaders, who not only arranged the event, but also refereed the games. Students from all of the schools greatly enjoyed the event and congratulations to Denton Primary School who emerged victorious!

Challenge Partners School Visit - 20th – 22nd March 2019

During next week, we are hosting a number of visitors to school to work in partnership with us, to help ensure that we are promoting best practice in all aspects of our educational provision. Challenge Partners is a national charity, whose aim is to foster continuous school improvement through a focus on practitioner led good practice. We are proud to have joined Challenge Partner's 'Network of Excellence' this academic year and are determined that we use this to further improve the student experience at Wollaston School. We also now have four members of staff who are trained reviewers and who have visited other schools across the country.

We are particularly keen for this type of practitioner led peer improvement programme, as we enjoyed a similar experience last year through a local authority pilot scheme. This led to the implementation of a couple of key strategies which helped to secure our best ever GCSE results in 2018 - so we have evidence that this approach works!

The visit next week will see our visitors speak with a range of students and staff, as well as visiting lessons. The team is made up of senior leaders from a variety of good and outstanding schools from across the country. Following the visit, the team will identify areas of good practice observed and any recommendations for further improvement. We are also pleased to welcome as part of the team, the Head of Challenge Partners School Visits - so this really is an opportunity to show off all that is wonderful about Wollaston School!

Thank you as always for your support of Wollaston School. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us via email on office@wollaston-school.net.

Yours sincerely,



Mr James Birkett
Headteacher