

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Half term! And what a remarkable first half of the term it has been. The last seven weeks have rocketed by, reminding us all of the intensity of 'proper' school for the first time in 18 months. The school has been truly alive again, with our extracurricular activities running and the school buzzing with the sounds of learning, collaboration and fun. The students have engaged with varied and lively lessons and impressed us with their energy, enthusiasm and commitment. I have so enjoyed the chance to meet parents in every year group in the school, as well as welcoming prospective families to both the Junior and Senior School. However, I think it is fair to say that the pace has taken its toll on all of us and we are ready for a good rest.

Last week, our 1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey team represented Northampton High at the GDST Sports Rally with skill, bravery, and conviction and their hard work and dedication were keenly felt by all those rooting for them. Unfortunately, the team did not make it out of the pool rounds but they did draw 0-0 with the eventual winners and so the competition was fierce, and first place could have gone to any team. We are proud of their impressive performance and many thanks to the PE Department, especially Mrs Blake and Miss Fraser, for their coaching and guidance derived from many years of extensive sporting experience.

It was also a great pleasure to see our House Leaders guiding and supporting the younger students, especially the Year 7 pupils, with the Storytelling assemblies this week. The students organised extra time for more rehearsals and there were some extraordinary costumes and props as well as creative backdrops and music. Their leadership reminded us of the power and meaning of role models and highlighted the importance of driving to make something happen, rather than waiting for other people to offer you opportunities.

As a theatre lover, I was delighted to join the Year 10 GCSE Drama students for a workshop of 'Metamorphosis' by the theatre company Kat Mary Productions. Our students enjoyed the immersive experience and participated actively in the interactive style of the workshop. They embraced the rare and unique opportunity to perform in a professional setting, whilst gaining a thorough insight in multi-rolling, audience interaction, soundscaping, narration and characterisation. Well done to all involved and particular thanks to Mrs Marriott.

We are so lucky to have two full weeks of half term holiday so we can get the balance right between relaxation and preparation for the next half term. This may provide an opportunity for students to conduct an audit of deadlines and work that needs to be completed so that they are able to start the next half term with a clean slate. It is also a good time to sort and organise folders and, for public examination students, to start the process of rolling revision. Creating a clear plan, and the simple act of writing it out, will suddenly make

things seem more manageable. Of course, it is also important to eat, sleep and relax and make time to see friends and family.

We wish our 63 students and 7 staff all the best with the San Francisco trip taking place over half term and I am confident that they will thoroughly enjoy experiencing both sides of this tech-friendly region - hardware and software; art and science; city and nature; Silicon Valley and San Francisco - as they explore local museums, university campuses, and hands-on workshops. Good luck and bon voyage to them and we know the group will have a wonderful time, learn much about STEM and be excellent ambassadors for the school. Again, we are most grateful to the accompanying staff and to Mrs Hodgetts-Tate in particular for the tremendous amount of work she has done to organise the trip. Please, don't forget to ensure your traveller gets to school on time: Sunday 23 October at 7:30am. The coach waits for no one...

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to revisit the uniform expectations. Uniform is an important part of a school's identity. It reinforces who we are as a community and helps allow students to feel pride in their school. It also helps prepare students for life after school where many will have to dress smartly for work. It would be fair to say that, in the last two weeks, we have had a number of interpretations of what is and is not acceptable uniform. With that being said, we recognise that maintaining standards of uniform rely on a high degree of cooperation between parents, students and the school. Therefore, I would also like to thank those families who do ensure that their children are dressed appropriately for school each day. Your contribution is very much valued. It is very important we maintain and take forward the high standards we have all established since the start of the school year. Please refer to our [uniform policy](#) on the website for further reference.

I hope that you all enjoy a wonderful break and look forward to seeing everyone back at school on Monday 7 November for the second half of term.

With best wishes,

**Dr May Lee**  
**Head**