

18th December 2018

Dear parents and carers

As the end of term approaches it provides the perfect opportunity to take a moment to reflect on this last term and all the successes and achievements of our students. As ever, I am always amazed at how quickly this term goes, at how much our students manage to fit into it; and at how quickly our year 7s settle in and start making a really positive contribution to St James. They have shown such a wonderfully caring and can-do attitude as a year group and have been so impressive in terms of their behaviour and conduct round school.

As with every term, there has been so much happening both in and out of the classroom since we started back in September, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our staff for their part in arranging and hosting these events; and to our students for embracing them and being active and positive participants. Our outdoor education programme continues to grow and grow. This year 30 students have signed up for Ten Tors and DofE have already started training in earnest - and in some horrible weather conditions! Nineteen students have successfully completed their practice expedition along the South West Coastal Path with an overnight camp in Budleigh Salterton and twenty students have also completed an overnight camp in Princetown for their Ten Tors training.

Our students' generosity has been seen on so many occasions this last term; from their fundraising efforts for Guide Dogs for the Blind, Save the Children and Children in Need; to their musical performances in a local care home; and in their support and kindness towards each other. It is so lovely to see and plays a huge part in creating a sense of community at St James.

Our St James Young Enterprise team have formed their company called 'Root' and have had a very successful start to business and the competition! With the help of Miss Dunk they attended a Christmas fair in Exeter High Street where the judges commented on their confidence, openness and clear communication. Through sales at the fair and sales in school they completely sold out of Christmas Wreaths (their first product) and have made a very healthy profit to start planning their next one. It was also really exciting to see them awarded 1st place in the judging for 'considering the customer in relation to their product'.

Our students' sporting successes have been plentiful this last term, helped by an expanding fixtures list and a really positive uptake in our extra-curricular clubs. We have had students taking part in Year 9 Netball, U13 Girls Football and representing the school in the Exeter Schools Cross Country Championships - in which three students qualified for the Devon Schools XC championships at Stover School in January. Our Year 7 Rugby team competed to great success in the annual East Devon Rugby Festival after a series of strong wins against local schools; an achievement matched by the Year 8 boys Rugby in the TWMAT Rugby tournament at Isca. Thank you to the PE dept and to those teachers who volunteer to drive the minibus for arranging and supporting these events.

Rehearsals for Buggy Malone have been happening weekly and are going really well. It is fabulous to see so many students involved in the production; a true testament to how much creative talent our students

possess! It promises to be a fantastic show, a real show stopper of a musical, so please make sure you come and see it. Performances are on the 7th and 8th February and tickets will go on sale after Christmas.

We have had two evenings this term focused on celebrating our students' successes: our Year 12 Awards evening and the Ted Wragg MAT Celebration evening. A huge well done to all those students who were very deserving winners; and I have no doubt that we will be seeing more worthy recipients at our KS3, Year 9 & 10 and Year 11 Award Evenings in the Spring and Summer terms. Our Reward Event on Friday which saw over 60 students go to the Christmas Markets in Exeter city centre was another lovely opportunity to celebrate how well our students are doing and recognise how many of our students display exemplary behaviour for learning every day.

Year 11 have really impressed me this term with such a positive and diligent approach to their studies and preparations for their mock exams. They have all been working incredibly hard in lessons with many of them attending twilights after school and I am confident that if they continue with such a positive work ethic they will achieve great things in the summer. Well done year 11 and keep it up! Make sure you have a good break over the holidays so you come back rested and full of energy.

We are very sad to have to say goodbye this term to Mrs Feasey, Miss Gawlik and Miss Amadi. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their hard work and commitment to St James. They will be greatly missed and we wish them every luck in the next exciting chapter of their lives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to Andy Mulcock, our Chair of Governors, and a huge, huge thank you for everything he has done for St James. Andy has been a governor for 12 years and has given countless hours of his time to St James and has been instrumental in helping St James become the school it is today. Andy has been invited to join the Board of Trustees for the Ted Wragg MAT, so he will still be very much involved in St James' future, and we wish him all the best in his new exciting role. James Frampton, Vice Chair, will be taking on the role of Chair of Governors. James is a very experienced governor, and I feel very confident that he will continue all the fantastic work that our Governing Body has been involved in.

We are holding our annual Christmas concert on Wednesday 19th December starting at 7pm. This is always a lovely festive evening and a real tribute to all the talented performers that we have at St James. There is no need to buy tickets, please just come along and enjoy!

Please be aware that on Thursday 20th December students will finish their school day slightly earlier than usual and will be dismissed at 13:10. Please note that the school buses will not be available at this time so any students who get the school bus home will need to catch the public bus.

All students return to St James on **Tuesday 8th January** at 08:35. It will be a **Week B**.

I would like to thank you for your continued support, in particular with our new on site traffic and mobile phone policies. The positive impact of both has been clear to see and are testament to the strength of the partnership between parents, students and school. If you have any suggestions for how we can further improve the school please do get in touch.

On behalf of everyone at St James, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Amy Grashoff
Headteacher