

## Headteachers' Newsletter

20 December 2024



Dear Families

### Christmas Message from Ms Hernandez



Happy holidays one and all

When I took a moment to reflect on the term gone by, I was amazed by the wide range of events and activities that have taken place this term to support our students and the local community. Head over to our Facebook page to see all of our recent Christmas activities.

As a school we continue to demonstrate the school core values of R.I.S.E.

**Respect:** I was extremely proud of our Remembrance service on November 11<sup>th</sup> led by a poem read by Eve Caldwell followed by the playing of the last post by Fiona Philips - with many students representing their Cadets, Brownies and Scout's. I was honoured to see the schools mark of respect for fallen soldiers.

**Integrity:** Both our youngest and eldest students have settled into the school year very well with the Year 7s quickly becoming resilient and overcoming new barriers together with the changes that you face when joining secondary school. From the way our Year 11s have held themselves around school, gleefully hounded by Mr West to hand in their succession postcards, to how they have conducted themselves in the PREs to ensure that they are able to give themselves the best possible chances of success in this summer's GCSEs.

**Success:** It was amazing to celebrate with so many students and their families and to be able to recognise their rewards thus far with them being rewarded for demonstrating all of our school's core values both inside and outside of school. I am also extremely proud of the many successes of our sports teams and I understand that the school performance cast are making excellent progress in their rehearsals. I am also incredibly grateful to FOSH for all their hard work arranging the postcard sale and wreath making evening and getting a shout out on Radio 2 by Dermot O'Leary!

**Empathy:** I have seen the way students bounce back from issues and barriers they may be facing whether this be relating to friendships, teachers or within a particular subject. Students and staff at Stowmarket High are quick to support one another in their time of need and show kindness no matter what the situation. Showing the quality of 'kindnesses' are moments I cherish the most as Headteacher.

I am very happy to share the kind donations you and your families have made which have enabled us to support local charities at this time of the year, which includes Stowmarket Food Bank. If you haven't donated yet and can afford to, please visit Parentpay to donate the recommended £5.00 which covers all events and non-uniform days for the academic year.

This year's Edurio Survey saw a marked improvement from last year. Both the Trust and National average results have sky-rocketed since then. The survey demonstrated significant improvements and increased confidence across all aspects of the school as stated by staff, students and parents. Our school is striving for success at every stage for your child and we really appreciate the active collaboration and communication that now exists for everyone.

In the hustle and bustle of a busy school term it can be easy to forget some of the events my staff organise to provide amazing opportunities for students to experience life beyond the classroom. This was especially evident in

the 'Drop Down' day in November which saw students benefit from careers workshops, guest speakers, a mastermind of Maths based activities, Dragons Den bids, healthy eating sessions, to hearing about university life. A massive thank you again to Ms Utteridge and Ms Mylrea for organising.

Alongside these opportunities we have seen some of our Year 11s visit Lakeside Shopping Centre alongside some wet and drizzly Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. A special thankyou to all the staff that give up their time to support these activities and events.

What isn't quite as obvious in this newsletter perhaps, is the continuing developments we are making in the standards of behaviour and teaching and learning we continually review and adapt, which ultimately translates into progress and outcomes for your children.

As we head further into winter and particularly in the current period of cold weather, I am very aware of how the current financial situation could be affecting many families in our school community. The cost-of-living crisis is something that affects us all and we will continue to do everything we can to support our students and their families. If you are personally struggling, please do reach out to us to get the latest advice around support in your local area.

I cannot believe how quickly the Autumn term has passed and as we approach the festive period, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support. Stowmarket High School continues to thrive and improve and with the school expansion looming we are excited to be able to accept more students in the years to come. The 17<sup>th</sup> December was a highlight for me, I got to wear my Christmas jumper, have a Christmas dinner and see the amazing efforts for the Christmas hamper competition and show them off to local residents and the Mayor before donating them to the local foodbank.

A reminder that January 6th will be an Inset Day for staff only.

I would like to thank and wish our staff leavers this term, good luck in their new roles.

Staff include:

- Victoria Gibson (Design Technology teacher)
- Jane Skoulding (Maths teacher and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Department)
- Martin Mugari (Maths agency teacher)

Wishing you all a peaceful holiday season and a Happy New Year, Ms Hernandez

### School Office

Another reminder that on Friday 20 December we have an early finish time of 13.00. All the standard contract (non-public) will arrive early at 13.10. Registered services 88, 384 & 985 will operate at the usual times as they are public buses. ECSTO 88 is also a registered service which students can catch at 13:36.

Please ensure that you make arrangements for your child to get home safely – for bus timetables please follow this link:<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/school-travel/travelling-to-school/sb-stowmarket-and-stowupland-high-schools/>

If you have any further questions regarding buses routes, please contact Suffolk Onboard via email on [transport.service@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:transport.service@suffolk.gov.uk).



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### Drop Down Day 2024

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November every year group at Stowmarket High School took part in a range of extra-curricular and widening horizons activities. This was the first of 3 days to run throughout the academic year. Students were able to demonstrate a range of employability skills (such as leadership, communication and teamwork) and develop their subject specific skills in areas such as maths, English, drama, art and business studies. Year 9 and year 11 engaged with employers and post 16 education providers during the day either within school or with their families.

We would like to warmly thank all of our visitors and staff for putting together an enjoyable experience for the students, many of whom were able to demonstrate their skills and confidence in ways we don't always see in a daily classroom environment.

**Mrs Utteridge**

**Subject Co-ordinator for Business Studies**



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### Exams Office

There will be two formal Year 11 GCSE examinations taking place W/C 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025:

- 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025      13:10 - Health & Social Care
- 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025    09:20 - Child Development

All students entered for these exams have received their timetable/ seating plan.

### **PSHE PARENT GROUP - ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING?**

We are continuing to develop our school's Relationships and Sex Education policy and would like to engage with more families about the content of our RSE programme.

As the DfE statutory guidance states: 'Parents should be given every opportunity to understand the purpose and content of Relationships and Sex Education. Good communication and opportunities for families to understand and ask questions about the school's approach help increase confidence in the curriculum.'

If you would like to be involved in a small working group, please get in touch with me and I will be able to give you more information and answer any questions you may have about the role by emailing me at [c.ferguson@stowhigh.com](mailto:c.ferguson@stowhigh.com).

**Claire Ferguson, PSHE Lead**

### **We Will Rock You Cast**

After the Christmas break we plan to do two Saturday rehearsals in the lead up to the production. Please make a note of the dates below. A letter will follow in the new year, confirming the timings of the day and when students are required. We appreciate not everyone has availability but hope that most of the cast can attend:



Saturday 25 January 2025

Saturday 1 March 2025

**Miss Rea and Miss Hewitt**



Thank you to our hardworking kitchen staff providing us with our Christmas Lunches.

**It's Christmas in the  
Kitchen!**

### Upcoming Events/Examinations

Friday 20 December 2024	Last Day of term – early finish 1pm
Wednesday 8 January 2025	Health & Social Care Examination at 13:10
Thursday 9 January 2025	Year 9 Tripod Evening, 4-7pm
Friday 10 January 2025	Child Development Examination at 09:20
Thursday 11 January 2025	Year 11 Tripod Evening, 4-7pm

### Useful Contact Information:

Head of Year 7	Miss S Durrant	<a href="mailto:s.durrant@stowhigh.com">s.durrant@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 8	Miss R Harrigan	<a href="mailto:r.harrigan@stowhigh.com">r.harrigan@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 9	Miss O Hart	<a href="mailto:o.hart@stowhigh.com">o.hart@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 10	Mrs N Goss	<a href="mailto:n.goss@stowhigh.com">n.goss@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 11	Ms L Baker	<a href="mailto:l.baker@stowhigh.com">l.baker@stowhigh.com</a>
Finance		<a href="mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com">enquiries@stowhigh.com</a>
General Enquiries		<a href="mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com">enquiries@stowhigh.com</a>
Attendance/Student Absence		<a href="mailto:attendance@stowhigh.com">attendance@stowhigh.com</a>