Friday 6 November 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you all had a lovely half-term break and enjoyed some time to relax and recharge. It has been a really positive start to the new half term, with Year 8 settling straight back into school life and picking up where they left off after a busy but successful first half term. It has been great to see students return so positively, and there is plenty to look forward to between now and Christmas.
The coming weeks are always an exciting time in school, with a number of events and opportunities for students to get involved, whether through supporting our wider community, celebrating individual and collective achievements or simply enjoying some of the activities taking place across the school.

Dates for your diary:

- **11 November:** Remembrance Day Service
- **16–20 November:** College Assemblies
- **20 November:** Odd Socks Day, supporting Anti-Bullying Week
- **2 December:** Winter Music Concert
- **11 December:** Christmas Jumper Day
- **18 December:** Celebration Assembly

We will also be launching our annual Christmas hamper appeal, which is always a lovely opportunity for Year 8 and the wider school community to come together and support those who may need a little extra help at this time of year. As always, I hope students make the most of the opportunities available to them and continue to take pride in their contributions to school life.

Uniform
As the weather becomes colder and most likely wetter over the coming weeks, it is important that students continue to maintain our high standards of uniform. Blazers should continue to be worn as part of the school uniform, and students are expected to arrive at school and attend lessons in the correct uniform at all times. We appreciate that the colder weather may mean an extra layer is needed on the journey to and from school, but please ensure that any additional clothing is appropriate and in line with our school uniform expectations. Thank you for your support in helping us maintain these standards.

Tutor Time Curriculum
This half term, students will continue to explore a range of topics through Tutor Time, including Digital Literacy, Numeracy and Finance, the International Schools Project and Anti-Bullying Week. There will also be an opportunity for students to look back on their progress so far, reflect on their first set of academic data for the year and identify areas where they can set themselves targets and continue to improve.

Online Safety
Our latest Online Safety Newsletter is available to view on the school website November Online Safety Newsletter. This month's edition covers several important topics, including online grooming, the risks associated with online communities (COM Networks), WhatsApp channels and parental controls, as well as guidance around the use of ChatGPT for teenagers. There is some useful advice for parents

and carers, including things to look out for, ways to keep children safe online and how to have open conversations about their online activity. I would encourage you to take a few minutes to read through the newsletter, as it provides some important information to help support and protect young people online.

Hooked! **- new Year 7 & Year 8 book club**

The English department are excited to launch ***Hooked!***, a new book club for our Year 7 and Year 8 students, designed to spark curiosity, encourage reading for pleasure and help young people discover books they genuinely love.

Reading plays a vital role in young people's development, both inside and outside the classroom. It supports progress across the curriculum, strengthens vocabulary and communication skills, develops imagination and critical thinking, and helps students to build their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Just as importantly, reading can provide enjoyment, relaxation and an opportunity to explore different perspectives and experiences. At school, we continually encourage our students to make reading a regular part of their lives, not simply as a tool for academic success, but as a valuable habit that can enrich them well beyond their time in education. We would love parents and carers to support us in this by encouraging reading at home, talking to their children about what they are reading and, wherever possible, helping them to make time for reading for pleasure. Even a little encouragement can make a real difference in helping young people develop a lifelong love of books.

Our motto is simple: Try a story. Share your thoughts. Find your next favourite.

Taking place every four weeks during Thursday break time in the school library, Hooked! will give students the opportunity to explore a different book in a fun, relaxed and welcoming environment.
At each session, students will read the opening chapter of a new book together before sharing their thoughts, discussing their predictions and deciding whether they would like to continue reading. Copies of the featured book will then be available in the library for students to borrow if they want to find out what happens next.

To add an extra element of excitement, we will be running a £10 Amazon voucher competition at every session. Students who read the rest of the featured book can submit a 200–300 word review covering what they thought of the book, who might enjoy it and whether they would recommend it. The student who writes the best review will win the voucher.
Our aim is to make reading a shared experience: an opportunity to discover new authors, exchange ideas, develop confidence and enjoy the pleasure of getting lost in a good story. Whether your child already loves reading or is still searching for the right book, they will be equally welcome.

Club details

- Who: Year 8 and Year 7 students
- When: Every four weeks, during Thursday break time
- Where: The school library

Planned session dates

- Thursday 12 November 2026
- Thursday 10 December 2026
- Thursday 21 January 2027

- Thursday 25 February 2027
- Thursday 25 March 2027
- Thursday 6 May 2027
- Thursday 10 June 2027
- Thursday 8 July 2027

We hope Hooked! will help more of our students discover the excitement of reading, develop positive reading habits and share their enthusiasm with others. We would love to see as many Year 7 and Year 8 students as possible getting involved. Thank you for your continued support in helping us foster a lifelong love of reading.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for working in partnership with us. It is greatly appreciated and plays an important part in helping Year 8 enjoy a positive and successful school experience. I look forward to keeping you updated as the half term progresses.



Mr B Butler
Head of Year 8