

21 July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of another academic year, but we are. Ending with our Celebration Assembly at the end of Celebration Week was a perfect way to end the term.

To celebrate together as a community the achievements and successes of the students was a joy and as always, we are so very proud of each and every one of them. Not everyone received an Award today, but every single student has done something this academic year to be proud of and, whilst they may not have been on stage to collect a certificate, we recognise each and every small step our students are taking towards independence, academic success or developing their confidence.

Our school vision is that students aspire to achieve and leave us with the skills needed to be socially and economically engaged in the future. At this time of the year, it is a perfect opportunity to reflect on this and how each child is moving closer towards this goal. Our work around employability and the Skills Builder curriculum is all about developing those soft skills required to be able to engage with the world around them more confidently. Employability skills are the skills needed to confidently order a meal, catch a bus or train, go to college, start a job, go to university ... they are the skills that we use every day without even knowing that we are using them and can often be taken for granted. At Undershaw we nurture these skills, we understand their importance and we recognise that many of our students struggle to develop them.

Therefore, we are always so very proud when we help our students take the next steps in their journey. In the assembly, we celebrated our Post 16 students who leave us today, all of them are going into further education with more confidence, qualifications and skills to ensure that they are able to socially and economically engage. We were also contacted this week by a student who left Undershaw last year to study A Levels, asking if he could come back to speak to existing students about how the skills he learned at Undershaw have helped him navigate the transition to further education. How wonderful! We look forward to welcoming him when he visits in September.

So, as we enter into the summer break, please do take the time to reflect with your child on all that they have achieved this year and how proud they should be of themselves.

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House Cup

Huge congratulations to Colclough House who are the winners of this year's House Cup! It was a close-run race this year, with Percy House taking the lead for most of the year and winning the Sports Cup. Well done, Colclough!

Celebration Week

We have had an amazing Celebration Week this week with all classes having a trip out. The class always vote on their trip so this year we have a wide range of activities; Thorpe Park for Yr 11, bowling for Yr 10, swimming and bowling, and an escape room challenge and McDonalds trip for Yr 9, an overnight camp for Yr 8, Go Ape at Alice Holt for Yr 7 and a trip to Fishers Farm Park for the KS2 classes. Each trip was brilliant, and the students were a credit to the school! There are some wonderful pictures of the trips on Facebook so please do take a look.

This month's newsletter

July's edition of [This is Us](#) sees a welcome to our new English teacher, Bekkie Roberts, a full report on the annual Sundial Festival (and a selection of the many, many photos!), a focus on Dramatherapy from Tiff and Kate, a recap of 22/23 and a vast array of summer activities from the SaLT team, and the cheque ceremony from our partnership with Little Lumpy. We have loved bringing you the highlights of Undershaw's activities this year in the monthly newsletters. Please contact Davinia if you have any feedback or suggestions on how the publication can improve in 23/24. Davinia can be reached via email on marketing@undershaw.education.

Safeguarding during the holiday

Should you have any safeguarding concerns about a child during the break please contact:

Surrey

Phone: 0300 470 9100 – 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: 01483 517898 – out of hours service

Hampshire

Phone: 0300 555 1384 during office hours – 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday

Phone: 0300 555 1373 – out of hours service or in an emergency dial 999.

Skills Builder Challenge

With the summer holidays just around the corner, hopefully this week's challenge will help with keeping everyone entertained!

Think of a job in your house or garden that needs doing (maybe cleaning up leaves or tidying a room). Write down the different tasks that need to be done to complete this job.

Now assign each of these tasks to a person in your house. Explain to each person why you have given them that job.

Does dividing up a job into smaller tasks make it easier for people to work together? Do you think each person will do their task? What might happen if they don't?

Reflection Questions

Getting Started: How can you find out about how others are feeling about something?

Intermediate: How can you find out more about strengths and weaknesses in others?

Advanced: How might you be able to motivate others to improve their weaknesses?

Mastery: What kind of leader would you like to be?

Staffing update

In staffing news this week, we say a fond farewell to Karen, my PA, who many of you will know has been an amazing member of staff – she knows everything and everyone! She will certainly be missed by the staff and students of Undershaw ... and by me! (I am not sure how we will cope without Karen). Her plans were to take retirement ...which we called semi-retirement, as we knew she would be looking for something to keep her busy very soon. For now, she will enjoy some well-deserved time off with her family ... with a term-time holiday booked already! Good luck with everything Karen and thank you for being such an amazing support.

A few words from Karen ...

I wanted to share with families that, after almost five years, I shall be leaving Undershaw at the end of this term, with plans to move on to a more part-time job. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here, and watching the students grow has been an absolute joy and privilege. I have so many fond memories, but I think the standout ones for me are:

- *the talent shows/celebration assemblies – seeing the students perform and watching them receive the recognition they deserve, in such an inclusive environment, has to be one of the best things ever!*
- *the Summer Proms – seeing how proud the students were of their achievements and how far they'd come in their confidence was always so special.*

I wish all the students, staff and parents all the very best for the future – I'll miss you all!

In September, we will welcome Geena to the school as PA to the Headteacher. Geena joins us from the University of Surrey where she is currently the PA to the Head of School for Law. Geena lives locally and is very excited to be joining the school and is looking forward to meeting the students and their families in the autumn term.

A few words from Geena ...

Hello, I am so excited to come and work at Undershaw in September as Emma's new PA. On a personal note, I enjoy baking, gardening, animals, and boardgames (I'm hoping that there will be a fair few children who will also share these passions at Undershaw!) For the last four years, I have been working as a PA to the Heads of School at the University of Surrey, in both the School of Law and the School of Psychology. One of my favourite activities at the University was planning events for students such as inclusive Sports Days, pizza and boardgame nights, art competitions, Halloween trick-or-treat stations, therapy dog and wellbeing events, and celebrations for different religious and cultural holidays. I also loved planning staff activities to bring the team together such as coffee-mornings, quizzes, picnics, and training opportunities. I worked in other educational roles before working at the University, such as an online systems administrator at AQA Exam Board, and I have a background as a Postgraduate at the University of Southampton, where I gained experience teaching additional support classes for international students. My favourite parts about working in educational environments is building rapport with the students, so that one day they come in feeling excited to tell you all about the new place that they went at the weekend, or the film that they just watched and want to recommend. I have real passions for enhancing the student experience, team building, and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. I am truly excited to meet you all, and to support Emma in Undershaw's continued success. All the best, Geena

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Positives of the week!

We really do appreciate it when parents and visitors take the time to email in and give us feedback, so please let us know if you have anything you would like to share. Here are some comments that we received this week ...

- This from a Yr 11 parent whose child is moving into our Post 16 provision:
"We know that Xxx has achieved far more than we ever imagined over the last two years ...we know that he would not have done that without the support and care of an incredible team of teachers and support workers – thank you."
- This from another Yr 11 parent whose child is moving onto a mainstream college:
"You have all been amazing and have helped to make Xxx the happy and confident young man he is today, full of enthusiasm for the next chapter in his life as he now says goodbye to Undershaw."

Upcoming dates

Here are our upcoming dates for the rest of the academic year – and please note these are not exhaustive and updates will be communicated.

Date	Time	Event
Thurs, 24 Aug		Results Day
Friday, 1 Sept		INSET DAYS – SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon, 4 Sept		
Tues, 5 Sept		
Wed, 6 Sept	8.30am	Students return – start of Autumn Term 2023
Tues, 10 Oct		Founders' Day (more details to follow)
Mon, 23-Fri, 27 Oct		October half-term
Mon, 30 Oct	8.30am	Students return – first day of Autumn Term 2nd ½
Fri, 15 Dec		Celebration Assembly Last day of term – finish time of 12noon
Tues, 2 Jan 2024		INSET DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED
Wed, 3 Jan 2024	8.30am	Students return – first day of Spring Term 2024

And finally, thank you for your continued support this year, and may I wish you and your families a very happy (and hopefully sunny!) summer holiday, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Wednesday, 6 September.

Kind regards

Emma West
Headteacher