

25 November 2022

OKEHAMPTON COLLEGE



Newsletter
Issue 3

Highlights

- Extended Learning Day
- Remembrance Day
- Faculty Updates

At  We are

Kind

Tolerant

Respectful

Independent

Committed

Resilient

Hardworking

Responsible

Principal's Message; Andrew Sweeney



Welcome to another newsletter where we want to share and celebrate with you many of the excellent things happening at Okehampton College from across the school. We are now deep into the autumn term and I can't quite believe where almost eleven weeks have gone. One of my expectations of all staff at the College is to regularly reflect on where we are in terms of the quality of our provision as a school, and how we know we are moving forward and improving. Huge steps forward have been made this term, many often happening behind the scenes but all very important parts of the process of ensuring every student at Okehampton College is given the opportunity to thrive. We are all facing huge challenges at the moment in day to day life and in schools across the country. Now more than ever we need to work together to ensure as a community we do everything in our powers to support the young people we serve and provide for.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year and worked with us to support every student. As always, if you have any questions, please get in touch.

Andrew Sweeney
Principal

Important Dates

- Tuesday 13 December Beauty & The Beast Opening Night
- Friday 16 December Last Day of Term
- Wednesday 4 January All Students Return

...Welcome / Count Down to GCSE's (Year 11)...

Vice Principal's Message; Phil Ruse



Year 11

Welcome to another busy edition of the Okehampton College newsletter. As ever, we will try to give you a sense of daily life at the College for our students. We have been back for 3 weeks since half term and it has been full of exciting events and student success stories;

Students have completed their first Extended Learning Day of the year. These collapsed timetable days are hugely important in providing dedicated time for students to engage with contemporary issues and their own personal, social and health education.

Our Year 11 students have been sitting their first series of mock exams in the last fortnight. They have really impressed us with the mature and responsible attitude they have shown. The wider student community has also demonstrated great solidarity with these older students in being very mindful and respectful in their behaviour and conduct around the main exam rooms.

Over the last few weeks members of our Senior Leadership Team have been visiting many of our feeder primary schools and speaking to Year 4,5 and 6 students as part of our enhanced transition programme. With so many recent changes in personnel at the College, it has been a major priority for us to get out and about in our wider community. This is all part of our desire to ensure Okehampton College is the school of choice for all young people in our surrounding area and to work hand in hand with our partner primary schools to ensure the transition for our young people is as smooth and efficient as possible.

At this time of year, thoughts often begin to turn to a number of celebratory events that Christmas brings. This year, do make time to come and see many of our fantastic students perform at our whole college show; Beauty and the Beast. Whether involved on stage or contributing behind the scenes to our sets and costumes, the cast are working tirelessly with the Octagon and music department being permanently full as a rehearsal space. After the disruption of recent years, it is fantastic to see such ambitious and inspirational events back on the College calendar.

Over the last fortnight our Year 11 cohort completed a mock exam programme which is a key milestone on the way to their final GCSE and BTEC exams in the summer. All of Year 11 should be congratulated for how they have approached this busy period and every young person should be able to reflect on what they have achieved. With mock exams, the grade or score achieved is much less important than the lessons learnt. Students will use their tutor programme in the last week of term to receive their mock exam grades and reflect on what they need to change and prioritise in the future, and how they can utilise the support on offer from their teachers at the College.

Before Christmas all Year 11 students will receive our Okehampton College sixth form prospectus which will give clear detail on the curriculum offer available to our young people at Post-16. There is no right or wrong destination at the end of Y11. For many our sixth form and the opportunities to study a range of A Levels or vocational qualifications in a College and supportive environment that they know well, is the right next step. For others, accessing apprenticeships or the more specialist courses and opportunities available at other colleges or providers will be appropriate. It is essential that in all cases, students and their families receive all the information and opportunities that are available, so that decision making can be informed. Over the next few weeks and months students will benefit from a 'next steps interview' with a member of the senior leadership or Year 11 team where they can discuss these choices and ask any questions to help firm up their decision making.

We will be accessing external careers information, advice and guidance from a level 6 trained Careers Advisor so all our students can benefit from the independent and specialist advice they need at this crucial stage in their lives. The most important message is that these next steps need to be negotiated with the student, school and home working in full collaboration so that our young people can reach their full potential over the next few months and years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Ruse'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey background.

Phil Ruse
Vice Principal

...Extended Learning Day / Remembrance Week...

Extended Learning Day

As part of the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust, the co-operative values are very important to us at Okehampton College. Within their wider curriculum we aim to expose students to the true meaning of these values, namely solidarity, self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equity and equality. These cannot be taught and learnt in a fixed period but must be lived through our daily actions and attitudes so that students can see and feel their true meaning.

Our tutor programme is a major part of this process. This year we have moved to students experiencing 2 interactions with their form tutor each day. A morning 'check in' is where uniform and equipment for the day are checked and any potential issues triaged. Whereas, the longer afternoon session sees students engage in their tutor programme, including PSHE lessons and year group specific activities.

This PSHE (Personal, Social & Health Education) is enhanced by our calendar of extended learning days. Last week this saw students working in their tutor groups for an extended period of time. Year groups covered the following important issues:

- Y7 – Positive relationships and finance.
- Y8 – Relationships and consent and personal finance
- Y9 – E-safety and careers
- Y10 – E- safety and careers
- Y12-13 – Attended an external event on the importance of road safety.

There can be no question how important all these themes and issues are, not only to students here and now but also when thinking about the future. The biggest goal of Okehampton College is that when our students leave us, whether that be at the end of Y11 or Y13, they are ready for the next steps in their life and are active citizens, ready to contribute to and enhance the community in which they live.

Remembrance Week 2022

The week beginning 7th November was Remembrance week at the College. Again, Remembrance posters were displayed around the College as a constant reminder to students of the importance of the week. Mr Rodgers (with the help of Mr Giles with Year 10) delivered Remembrance assemblies to all year groups including Post-16 students. We remembered the sacrifices made by British servicemen and women around the globe since 1914, the amazing contributions from people of colour like Walter Tull (who was the focus of a campaign led by his former football clubs Tottenham and Northampton to receive the Military Cross posthumously). The focus this year was on remembering the Falklands War as it was the 40th anniversary of the conflict and it is a war that many young people are unaware of. We remembered the impact of war on the survivors like Kevin Woodford who lost his left leg when Sir Galahad was bombed, Chris White who helped to save him; Michael Iddon an army medic who even today is struggling to come to terms with the conflict and Robert Lawrence, who in the last hours of the war, was shot in the head from behind, losing 45% of his brain and most of his mobility down his left hand side.

The students were incredibly respectful during the assemblies. With Remembrance Day falling on the Friday, the College showed its respect school wide. Mr Rodgers, over the tannoy, read the poem 'The Poppy' by Paul Hunter. Students then stood as the Roll of Honour of all past students who died during WW1 and WW2 was read out, followed by another excellent rendition of the Last Post by Ciaran Hopkins in Yr13. Once again, the two minute silence was respectfully observed.

The week culminated in Mr Brett, Mr Rodgers and Joseph Gwidza (Yr11) representing the College at the Okehampton Remembrance parade on the Sunday. The town came out in force to show their respects and it was a brilliant and proud moment to see so many students representing different groups wearing their respective uniforms with pride.





...Faculty Updates...

Sports fixtures have begun and recently Okehampton College took a coach of students to Holsworthy to play netball and Rugby. We had Year 7 Netball, Year 8 Netball, Year 8 Boys Rugby and Year 10 Boys Rugby. The Year 7 Netball team made an impressive debut winning their match. The Year 8 Boys Rugby won their match, and The Year 10 Boys rugby won their match. Year 8 Girls lost their netball match, but a great game was had in windy and cold conditions. Player of the match was awarded to our Centre C Garratt!

Students from Years 7-11 competed in the Exeter and District Cross Country Championships on Wednesday 9th November at St Lukes C of E school. They all performed amazingly in difficult wet and muddy condition. Although it didn't stop 17 students qualifying for the next round of this national competition which will be held on Thursday 24th November. Well done to all of those who ran!

A team of Year 9 and 10 Netball players played against Queen Elizabeth in Crediton on Tuesday 15th November; it was a close game, but Okehampton College came out triumphant in a 16-14 win.

Cross Country



Year 8 Boys



Year 8 Girls



Year 9 Boys



Year 10 & 11 Boys



Year 10 Girls

Geography Fieldwork on the Okehampton Train Line's One Year Anniversary



On Wednesday afternoon (16th November), Mr Fox, Ms Hopcraft and a group of Year 9 students went into Okehampton town and then on the train to and from Exeter, to take surveys for the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP). The week before Nicky Harmer from Plymouth University came into College to help the group of Year Nines create the surveys.

Our survey focused on how the re-opening of the Dartmoor line has affected local businesses, and at what people think of the train one year after it reopened. Around 40 surveys were carried out by the eleven students and with most responses appearing to be quite positive! Our plan is to create a display of the results in the geography department and share our project with the Okehampton Times. Despite there being a small disruption due to a broken down train, the trip was great, we got a lot of responses, met some lovely people, and it was a fantastic opportunity. Thank you to Nicky Harmer from Plymouth University and the DCRP for providing us with free travel!

Written by Sienna Harding, Year 9

...Faculty Updates...



As we are now settled into the new Academic Year, I felt it was appropriate to share with you my thoughts on using Sparx homework for Maths.

The absolute main benefit of Sparx homework is that it provides individualised homework questions for your child. Over the weeks it learns about their ability by assessing the time it takes them to answer questions, the number of errors they make (or don't make) and the number of times they may watch any of the help videos. Subsequent homework questions are then tailored towards their ability – so your child will have different questions to others in the class. More challenging if they are finding it easy or less challenging and more repetitive if extra support and practice is needed to master a skill. It is really important therefore, that parents do not answer the questions for the students; support and help is great but please encourage the use of the help videos first otherwise subsequent homework could be pitched at the wrong level for your child.

The questions will follow our scheme of work, so will not be assessing a new topic and therefore should be familiar to your child. The second big benefit of using Sparx homework, is that retrieval practice is also embedded within the homework. This means that students are regularly revisiting topics from previous months or years to help with the revision process and retention of skills. If your child is in Year 11 this is a fantastic opportunity to undertake weekly revision in the run-up to exams.

The students also get immediate feedback on their homework – questions are marked instantly, and they are allowed a second go if they get one wrong. There are also short instructional videos to help if they have forgotten what to do. Of course, there will always be some occasions where students are still stuck. The easiest and best thing to do at that point is for the student to either email their teacher or ask them in their next lesson. For that reason, it is a really good idea for the students to attempt the homework as soon as possible so they have time to do this; so please encourage your child not to leave it to the night before it is due!

Students can also now complete extra work on Sparx alongside their homework by using the Independent Learning feature.

Topics are searchable for extra practice and revision and questions are scaffolded to help students progress through a topic. This is an excellent feature which I would recommend to all students.

Currently the weekly homework is set on these days:

- **Years 7,8 and 9** – Set on Friday and due the following Friday
- **Year 10** – Set on Thursday and due the following Thursday
- **Year 11** – Set on Wednesday and due the following Wednesday.

Achievement points are given for those students who complete the homework in full and on time. Extra achievement points can also be earned if students complete either the XP boost or Target optional homework. These are great if students' wish to challenge themselves even further.

We have high expectations of our students and know that completing their weekly homework will benefit them; therefore a behaviour point will be given for non-completion and a Sparx detention will be issued if it remains incomplete.

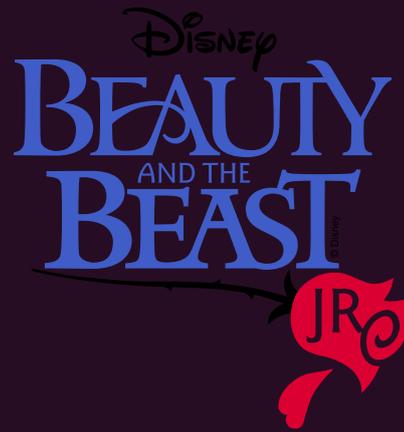
If you have any questions about Sparx homework then please, in the first instance, contact your child's maths teacher.

Mrs Carter
Head of Mathematics

SPARX MATHS



Okehampton College Proudly Presents



Tuesday 13th - Friday 16th December

The Octagon Theatre

Tickets £6 each

Doors open 6:45pm

Show starts at 7pm

• Refreshments • Raffle •

To book tickets email jstevens@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

Music by
Alan Menken

Lyrics by
Howard Ashman & Tim Rice

Book by
Linda Woolverton

Originally Directed by Robert Jess Roth

Originally Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Music Theatre International
All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI

www.mtishows.co.uk



Can you help?

Okehampton College are looking for sponsors to advertise in the programme for their production of Beauty and the Beast.

If you would like to place an advert or for more information please email:

jstevens@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

Or call: 01837 650910

Okehampton College PTFA Hamper Raffle Tickets

Tickets £1 each

On sale at the Edwardian Evening
in the Charter Hall on Thursday Dec 1st

Or paypal: okehamptoncollegeptfa@yahoo.com

(Please pay as "friends and family" to avoid fees)

Thank you for your support



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