

# OKEHAMPTON COLLEGE



Newsletter  
Issue 4

## Highlights

- Careers Fair
- Head of Year & Faculty Updates

At  We are

Kind

Tolerant

Respectful

Independent

Committed

Resilient

Hardworking

Responsible

## Vice Principal's Message; Phil Ruse



What a busy fourteen weeks that has been! This term has been a fact-finding mission for me as I got to know the real Okehampton College; it's fantastic students, it's hugely talented staff and the wider local community. I am proud to work at a college where co-operative values are front and center in our daily life. The 8 Okehampton Habits have really been in evidence at the end of this busy term too. Year 11 and Year 13 have completed a busy period of mock exams in the last month. Commitment, hard work and resilience have been in real evidence. As ever, mock exams are useful for the next steps and targets they generate rather than the actual grades achieved now. Every student should know the College has their back and the best results will always be achieved when home, school and the young person are working in genuine collaboration.

We all strive to demonstrate kindness, respect, and tolerance daily. The eye-catching murals, based on student inspiration and ideas bring vivid imagery and meaning to these words. We know at times mistakes are made which may compromise these values or habits. Supporting students and adults to learn from these experiences where we may get something wrong is every bit as important as the time they spend in classrooms learning from our diverse and knowledge rich curriculum.

I must finish by mentioning the fantastic College show, Beauty and the Beast. What a showcase this has been for the potential and the talent amongst every year group at this college. The pandemic has disrupted the flow of our outreach and community work in recent years, but it is now firmly back on the agenda. What has really delighted me is how the dramatic performances on stage have only been made possible by the work done in the background. Staff and students alike have contributed to set design, props and costumes, lighting, and technical assistance. Independent work, self-responsibility and commitment have been integral to this work. The expressive arts faculty and members of the wider staff

## Important Dates

- Wednesday 4th January 2023 - All Students Return
- Wednesday 11th January 2023 - Post-16 Curriculum Evening For Year 11
- Friday 20th January 2023 - Final Date For Post-16 Application Forms
- Friday 10th February 2023 - Last Day Of Spring Half Term

# ...Careers Fair...

body should be congratulated for the time, commitment, and guidance they have provided for our young people. They should be commended for how they have stoically adapted to the disruption caused by the weather this week and have managed their emotions commendably. I really hope those students take some time over the next week to reflect on what they have achieved and how they have been part of something so inspiring which will provide happy memories and invaluable experiences that they can call on in the future.

Can I take this opportunity to wish you and all your family and friends a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I cannot wait to see what 2023 has in store.

I would like to publicly thank a number of staff who are leaving Okehampton College at the end of this term; Miss Rhona MacGregor, Mr Gareth Blunt, Mrs Kimberley Clarke and Mr John Waddington. All have made massive contributions both within the classroom and through the pastoral care received by students at the college. In John's case he has given over 30 years service to Okehampton College and has influenced the lives of thousands of young people in that time. We look forward to welcoming our new teaching and support staff members in January.



Phil Ruse  
Vice Principal

## Dartmoor Trust Launches Expansive New Careers Fair

Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust is due to launch its first ever regional careers fair in March 2023, and is calling on local businesses to come and take part.

The Fair – designed for more than 2500 students in years 9 -12 from the Trust's 3 secondary colleges – will take place on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th March, at The Ashbury Hotel near Okehampton.

With over 100 trade stands, a programme of speakers for students to experience, bespoke sessions for SEN students, and an open evening for parents to attend, the Trust is confident it will be a successful event and of huge benefit to its young people.

Businesses who would like to take part are able to complete the following form to register their interest: <https://forms.office.com/r/TLFqTeZWWH> or scan the QR code to book their space and supply the Trust with further details.

Given this is the Trust's inaugural event, DMAT is not charging organisations for their stands. However, should they wish to, businesses can donate as part of their corporate social responsibilities by sharing further details through the form.

The venue will be open from 6pm on 7th March for setting up or from 7.30am on 8th March. Accommodation is also on offer for those that require it, at the sister Manor Hotel with the discount code 'DMAT'. Please call 0800 458 3026 to book.

Please contact Melissa Trudgill, Community Engagement Manager, Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust [mtrudgill@dmatschools.org.uk](mailto:mtrudgill@dmatschools.org.uk) with any queries you may have.

Dan Morrow, Trust Leader for Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust, said:

"We're hugely excited for this event next year, and are already pleased with the number of organisations who are due to come and speak to our brilliant students. This event will be the largest of its kind in the Torridge and West Devon areas and will bring in students from a wide geographical area and often from very rural areas – thereby providing them with a unique and hugely important opportunity to see the careers which may be available to them."

## Dartmoor Trust Careers Fair

### 8th & 9th March 2023

We are excited to let you know about our Careers Fair for Years 9 -12 across the Trust, held at Ashbury Hotel near Okehampton.

The venue will be open from 6pm on 7th March for setting up or from 7.30am on 8th March.

Scan the QR code to book your space



Please contact Melissa Trudgill, Community Engagement Manager at Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust: [mtrudgill@dmatschools.org.uk](mailto:mtrudgill@dmatschools.org.uk) with any queries you may have.



Dartmoor  
Multi Academy  
Trust  
www.dmatrust.org.uk

# ...Head of Year Updates...



A WORD  
FROM:

Mr Barker

Head of  
Year 7

Dear Year 7,

It's Christmas! Well done for getting through this half term so successfully; you have continued to settle into secondary school life with great enthusiasm. It's lovely to see that so many of you do the little things every day that together actually make a big difference to us all, including yourselves. Be it saying "Hi" to staff when you pass them in the corridor, stopping to hold a door for someone, volunteering to help during lessons, taking care of your surroundings, or one of a hundred other things that you do without realising it. They might not seem like much, but they really do add up.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank your amazing team of tutors who care for you and look out for you every day, they all go above and beyond with their time and energy. Always remember that they are there for you if you have any questions, or if there is ever something that you are unsure about or would like to talk about.

Massive congratulations to all those who have reached their Bronze Achievement Award for 250 positive points. At the time of writing there have been 92 more to go with the three students who reached that total in the first half term! I'm sure it won't be long before some of you start reaching your Silver Award for 500 points. As a year group you have received over 55000 points so far this year, working out at an average of 237 each, amazing! Furthermore, 98% of the points you have received on ClassCharts have been positive.

I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and New Year. I hope you all have fun, and get a good rest after all your efforts this term, just don't eat too much chocolate all at once! I will see you all in 2023!



Dear Year 8,

As we approach the end of term, I would like to congratulate you as a Year group on your positive attitude and always being Ready, Respect, Safe at Okehampton College. This term has been very busy for you all with clubs and sporting activities taking up much of your time and it has been great to see so many of you enjoying these opportunities. You have also set an excellent example to the new Year 7s and been supportive in helping them settle in at school.

At the start of next term, we are going to launch a new initiative for Year 8 students. Each day 2 students will have the opportunity to be student receptionists, enabling them to take on more responsibility and build their confidence whilst supporting the running of the school. Look out for more information at the start of next term.

I would like to thank the tutor team for all their hard work this term and also welcome Zoe Elsdon, our Pastoral Support Officer, into the Year 8 team. If you have any worries or concerns please speak to your tutor or pop in and see Zoe, or any of the pastoral team.

From all the Year 8 team, we wish you a Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.



A WORD  
FROM:

Mrs Wheelaker

Head of  
Year 8

# ...Head of Year Updates...



A WORD  
FROM:

Mrs Wiegema

Head of  
Year 9

Hello Year 9,

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to say hello and introduce myself as the new Head of Year 9. I have very much enjoyed my first few weeks in the role, and I want to say a huge well done and thank you to all students who continue to work hard and meet the school expectations. The rewards assembly has highlighted how successful our year group has been by receiving a total of 34,049 achievement points so far this year and it was lovely to be able to celebrate the success of those receiving their achievement badges.

As we approach the Christmas holidays and all have a well-earned rest, I am looking forward to continuing to celebrate the successes of our students in the new term. As a cohort we need to remain focused in our lessons, allow everyone within our classes the opportunity to learn and enjoy a broadened curriculum before we pick our options in the upcoming months. We have a fantastic set of tutors within our year group so please speak to us if you need any extra support.

Have a lovely Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.



A WORD  
FROM:

Mrs Hodgson

Head of  
Year 10

Thank you Year 10 for your continued dedication and hard work over this last term. It always feels a bit more challenging when the nights get longer but you have been committed to your education and kindness to others.

The week before October half term, we shared the information about Work Experience with the students and I know that many students have been pro active already when finding places. Please have discussions over the break about possible placements as we will be putting together some tutor time activities for the next half term. If you have any questions or queries, please speak to your tutor.

I hope you all have a very restful and relaxing break. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

# ...Head of Year Updates...



A WORD  
FROM:

Mr Wilson

Head of

Year 11

As we approach the Christmas break, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on some of the recent events that have happened and what is planned for the start of the spring term.

Mock Exams – I am pleased to share with you that most of our students have approached these with such maturity and determination. Grades from these assessments have been shared with you this week, with progress reports being released the week commencing 16th January.

Assessments can be incredibly beneficial for students – however, getting students to understand that can be quite a challenge. Exams help students to start revising early; to practise effective revision techniques; to improve their knowledge; to familiarise themselves with pressure and act as a guide moving forward. I am hopeful that the strategies we have in place for Year 11 will give them the greatest chances of achieving their potential next summer.

Most of our Year 11 tutor groups have now visited our Post-16 Centre on the Wardhayes Campus for guided tours and some overview of our Post-16 offer. To support their decision making at Post-16 level and so that they are quite rightly placed on the correct pathway next academic year, there will be a Post-16 Open Evening on Wednesday 11th January. The Trust are also hosting a Careers Fair for Years 9 – 12 at Ashbury Hotel on Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th March. It is anticipated that over 100 trade stands and guest speakers will be there for all to see. Details of these events can be found in this Newsletter, the College Facebook page, the DMAT website as well as recent communication from Mr Sproats (Post-16 Leader).

Furthermore, Future Smart Careers ([www.futuresmartcareers.co.uk](http://www.futuresmartcareers.co.uk)) will be working with us next term to deliver careers support and guidance across the year group. There will be an opportunity for tailored careers guidance and signposting for those students who need it most.

Mrs Luckhurst (Careers Lead) has seen almost all our tutor groups this term and will continue this work in the spring term. In addition to this, tutor groups will spend some 'Future Focus' tutor time next term exploring the use of 'Careers Pilot', the National Careers Service, who provide careers information, advice and guidance, as well as the resource - 'Skills Builder' ([www.skillsbuilder.org](http://www.skillsbuilder.org)).

Mrs Luckhurst has kindly offered to run after school CV Surgeries to help equip those students who may need a CV; particularly those thinking of an apprenticeship in the future. Details will be shared with students next half term during tutor time.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## Important: Reporting Absence

In the rare occasion that a student cannot attend school, parents, carers or guardians should contact the College for each day of non-attendance.

Please report any non-attendance by 7:45am. Contact may be made via telephone 01837 650910 or email, at [attendance@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk).

We comply with DfE guidance and will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents, carers and guardians should note that such leave is very unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents, carers or guardians wishing to request that a future absence or period of absence be authorised should complete an S2 form which can be found on the Devon County Council website. [Click here.](#)



# ...Faculty Updates...

In the last two weeks, Year 11s have been working exceptionally hard on their Spoken Language presentations, an important part of their English Language GCSE. It is always one of my favourite parts of Key Stage 4 English because it gives students the chance to explore a topic of genuine, personal interest and I love hearing about their ideas and experiences. For instance, so far, I have had students argue that palaeontology should be taught in schools; governments are covering up the existence of alien life; possession of nuclear arms should be a war crime; money can buy happiness, and the World Cup should not have been held in Qatar. A real range!

I can speak for all our English teachers when I say that we have all been blown away by the depth of students' knowledge, their level of preparation, and the well-reasoned arguments produced. There is always some nervousness around presenting to a large group and we are very proud of how Year 11 have stepped up to the challenge and shown themselves as the confident, thoughtful individuals they are. Well done!



## ...PE News...

On Tuesday 22nd November Mrs Colton took a Year 7 and a Year 9 team away to play netball at Tavistock College. Okehampton won both matches. The Year 7 team winning 12-0 and the Year 9 team winning 11-7. All the girls played brilliantly representing the college fantastically well.

On Tuesday 29th November QE travelled to Okehampton for a Year 9/10 and 11 netball fixtures. Despite illness and injury hitting our Okehampton teams hard we played a Year 10/11 team vs a QE year 11 team and a Year 9 team against a QE year 9/10 team. We won both games, in what were close and highly contested games. The Year 9 team won 5-3; the player of the match was nominated by the opposing team and was Megan D. The year 10/11 team won 12-7 and the player of the match nominated was Lily D (Year 10).

## English Student Presentation

I'm a Year 11 student and this is my first-hand experience:

I chose to do my presentation on the problems that seagulls cause in many seaside towns, as this is such an overlooked issue in today's society. Seagulls cause so much damage and stress to families, towns and entire cities, yet they are hardly acknowledged as a dangerous bird species, simply because they are so common!

It is important to prepare thoroughly for the speech, as the more you know about your chosen topic, the better your presentation will be and the more fluent your speaking will be. You have to research your topic so that you are well-informed and your speech sounds believable. People will trust what you are saying if you use facts, figures and anecdotes to be persuasive.

For me, public speaking is not as terrifying as it can be for others, for which I am very fortunate. But for everyone, confident or not, it is still nerve-wracking to have to speak for five to ten minutes and then answer questions, in front of the class. To help, I would recommend talking in front of your friends and family to get used to talking to larger numbers of people. Time your speech to ensure it is long enough and ask people to think of questions that you will have to answer in detail at the end, in order to obtain a good grade.

The next best thing is to volunteer yourself early on. The longer you leave it, the more worrying it will be and the more nervous you will appear. Trust me on this, it is better to get it done and dusted than to sit there in fear, waiting for your turn.

The great thing about this project is that you can choose the topic you want, something that interests you, but not so complex that people won't understand it. For example, people in my class spoke about deforestation, veganism, greed in football, electric cars and even a heated debate about which should go first on a scone: jam or cream?

Good luck, Year 11s!

*Alice Fewkes*



# A Few Cast Photos From Our Beauty And The Beast Production



[www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk](http://www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk)



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