



Serva Fidem

Headmaster: **Mr. Duncan Murphy** BA (Hons), MEd, FRSA
Member of IAPS & Society of Heads

Thursday 6th January 2022

Dear Parents

I trust you enjoyed a relaxing Christmas holiday with your families.

It is a great pleasure to see the boys and girls back in school this morning at the start of what promises to be a busy and exhilarating spring term, notwithstanding the well-documented challenges we may face. Thank you to Mrs Witts and her team who oversaw Lateral Flow Testing this morning for Years 7-11 in arctic temperatures! We are committed to maintaining as normal an educational experience as possible for the pupils within the parameters of government guidance and the potential for us to safely maintain a healthy staff ratio within the school.

First and foremost, I offer a warm welcome to Miss Lana Sumners who joins us as a second form teacher in Year 5 for the rest of the academic year and to Mr Mark Farmer who brings considerable energy and experience to the mathematics department. In the Study Centre, Ms Ilse Roets and Mrs Sue Jones will also add greater depth to the Study Centre team of tutors in numeracy and literacy respectively. I wish them a long and prosperous association with the school.

Over the holiday, you may have seen in the news about the sad death of **Sir Richard Rogers**. A former pupil at KHS, Sir Richard was an unconventional learner and found many aspects of his schooling a great challenge – yet he blossomed into one of the world's most eminent architects, with the Millennium Dome and the Pompidou Centre amongst a dazzling array of other achievements which feature prominently on a glittering CV. I wrote a short tribute about Sir Richard from the school, which can be found together with his obituary from The Times, on our website.

In my Headmaster's Assembly this morning, as is customary in January, I highlighted the significance of New Year as an apposite time for reflection and ambition. I challenged the children to make up their own **New Year resolutions** and set themselves some attainable targets for the months ahead. Please do take the time to discuss this with them together with the advice that evidence suggests an effective resolution typically helps others, not just themselves, in some way. For better or worse, I shared my own resolution – to try and do more cooking – although this may be a poisoned chalice for my family in more ways than one! You are encouraged to share

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any of your own examples, backed up by evidence, which will then likely find their way into the weekly "Mentions in Dispatches"!

In the near future, there are some natural opportunities for new, good habits to be put into practice. Our Year 11 cohort has important mock GCSE examinations over the next week or two whilst a small number of Year 6 pupils have impending 11+ pre-tests. There will also be school examinations for Year 8 after half term, which will help determine their GCSE options, as well as Year 10 for a check on their progress ahead of making applications to sixth forms in the new academic year. All of the teaching and support staff wish our students the very best of luck in these endeavours.

The **Kingswood House Way** character value for this term is INTEGRITY. Some of the key aspects of this quality, which we shall be exploring in more depth with the pupils, are loyalty, trust and empathy. We have fantastic 'character' badges, originally designed by Ruari Fitzpatrick, which are handed out each term and I hope to award a number of these sought-after badges to deserving candidates.

The **Subject Enrichment** focus for this half of term is Science. You will receive more information about some exciting opportunities in this subject from Miss Black. After the half term, the focus moves onto ICT and Sports. We will also hold a mufti day, with the theme of 'Favourite Characters', for **World Book Day** on Thursday 3rd March – so get your thinking hats on for some interesting costumes!

Parking

There continues to be some pressure in respect of parking in and around the School, especially at pick up time. Please act with consideration for other drivers, pedestrians and especially our neighbours. Naturally, it would be helpful if all parents were punctual, especially whilst the end of the school day is still dark, and you should not arrange to collect your child unsupervised from the car park. Please do collect a KHS car sticker for your vehicle from the school office if you do not already have one on display. I am due to meet again with the traffic councillor, and host local residents later this term, in order to work in partnership with them so any evidence I can show about how the school is addressing their comments will be invaluable.

Year 5 Meetings

I usually meet with Year 5 parents during the course of the spring term for a general chat. This is not obligatory but offers an opportunity for a personal catch-up. You are invited to make an appointment with Mrs Harding, Headmaster's PA, by emailing office@kingswoodhouse.org.

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Theatre Production

Mrs Horley and her team have been working extremely hard on the school production of ***Return to the Forbidden Planet***. At present, we are hoping that this will take place as planned with any caveats to latest government guidance being determined nearer the time. Please do support the boys and girls by bringing along family or friends to one of the evening performances on *Wednesday 9th & Thursday 10th February* at the Adrian Mann theatre, NESCOL. I wish all of the cast well and look forward to seeing the fruits of their labours on stage in the not too distant future!

Well-Being Week & Visiting Speakers

At KHS, we believe that a focus on well-being is an ongoing concern. Nonetheless, our annual Well-Being Week is a significant opportunity to hone in on topical matters as a school community. We have arranged for three excellent visiting speakers this term (primarily for Upper Prep & Senior pupils), but including the opportunity for all of you to join designated parent seminars, as follows:

- Tuesday 11th January, 5pm: **Floyd Steadman – Diversity, Equality & Inclusion**
- Tuesday 18th January, 6pm: **David Blake – Online Safety**
- Monday 14th March, time TBC **Paul Hannaford – Gangs & County Lines**

Please do take the initiative and attend these talks so that you can reinforce key messages at home. Further details will be sent out how to join nearer the time for each guest speaker.

Other Key Dates

Regrettably, two of our most popular events this term, the **Ski Trip and Jersey Tour**, have recently been cancelled by the hosts. However, there is the hotly-anticipated **KHA Quiz Night** to look forward to shortly after half term (Friday 25th February) - when the staff team will be fighting hard to regain the trophy. Do please support this event by arranging teams and tables at your earliest convenience.

Our inaugural '**Tea & Talk**' events for girls and their families were well-received last term and will continue in earnest with Roz McLeod on Monday 24th January and Merinda D'Aprano on Monday 7th March. *All girls and their parents are respectfully requested to attend these, please.*

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Open Mornings are scheduled on Friday 21st January and Friday 4th March. These will take place with appropriate safeguards in place during the school day and are a great way for our pupils to learn important life skills when touring visitors around the site. Details for the **Year 7 and Year 9 KHS Scholarship Morning** (Saturday 5th February) are available on the school website or you are welcome to speak to James March, Director of Studies, about any aspect of the process. Please note that the deadline for applications is approaching imminently before the end of January.

We are also still planning to host a **Sixth Form Open Evening** in person at the school (Thursday 3rd February) and a **Senior Lecture** (Thursday 24th March) for all Senior pupils and parents - as well as Year 8 for the latter event. Mr Dominic Wood, a renowned children's television personality and current KHS parent, will deliver the lecture and it promises to be a really exciting and interesting talk about his career in the spotlight. Furthermore, there is a **GCSE Options Evening** (Monday 21st March) for Year 8 families. Please note that these are compulsory events.

In the meantime, there are various parents' evenings or drop in opportunities for every year group, all of which are in the calendar, but in keeping with our 'open door' policy you are always welcome to email, ring or arrange a meeting with a member of staff via the school office if you have a query. A reminder that pastoral concerns should be discussed in a meeting, or a telephone conversation at the very least, rather than an email trail, please, with the form teacher or divisional head in the first instance.

I look forward to a productive term ahead and believe that if we help the boys and girls successfully negotiate the challenges of the next few weeks then the summer should offer some much-needed light at the end of the tunnel. With thanks for your ongoing patience, support and understanding at this exacting time for schools.

Yours sincerely

Duncan A I Murphy
Headmaster