

15 September 2023



Dear Parents and Carers

It has been a great first full week back at school and wonderful to see students returning to school life, engaged in their learning after the long summer break. In this letter you will find information on our Community focus, student leadership, how you can help your child foster good reading habits and how you can connect more with us and the school parent community.

I am delighted to see over two thousand merit points have already been awarded by teachers to students for displaying our school values. Well done in particular to Year 7 who have accumulated almost half of all the merits! Our merit points total is much higher than the same period last year, which is very pleasing. Our teachers also award students for 'Tutee of the Week' and 'Student of the Lesson' which is something to be very proud of, should your child be recognised in this way.

Returning to school after the summer is an opportunity to focus on restoring a sense of community among students and staff and welcoming new students to our community. This week we have had a particular focus on our school value of being Community Minded.

Being part of our community is all about the people we share our school with every day, the place we come to share our school experience, the values we share and the different individual identities within our community working together towards the same goal. To be community-minded is to look after that community, to together celebrate individual and collective success and to work to make our community a better place for ourselves and for those who will come after.

All students have had an assembly on this theme this week. You may wish to look at the assembly in this link and discuss this with your child. [Community Minded Assembly](#)

### **Student Leadership Opportunities**

We offer a great range of opportunities for students to be involved in our wider school community. The first such opportunity this year is to put themselves forward to be involved in student leadership by representing their tutor groups and year groups at our school council.

Assemblies launching student leadership for 2023 and elections for student leaders, will be held during tutor time this week and next. It is a great chance for students to be community-minded and have their voices heard. It will also provide them with opportunities for leadership training throughout the school year. We look forward to seeing all of the nominations and the results of the elections in the weeks to come.

## Teaching and Learning and quick tip for parents: Fostering good reading habits

One of the most important things that young people can do to improve their academic attainment is to improve their vocabulary. Fostering good reading habits at home can make a huge difference to academic success at the end of Year 11 and 13. Children who read books regularly have higher results in maths, vocabulary, reading and spelling tests than those who read less regularly. [1]

All students have access to an amazing app, SORA. This has hundreds of titles that they can download for free onto their phone or other device. They have been carefully sourced to be age appropriate and will help improve vocabulary. You could follow the plan below to foster these positive reading habits in your children:

- Have a weekly homework schedule that includes 30 minutes of reading two to three times a week. This could be after the completion of homework or at another time in the evening.
- Read the same books that your child is reading and read books aloud together – even with the older ones! You can use their login credentials on multiple devices to enjoy the books together and discuss them. If you would like to read your own book, model this by reading when they are reading.
- Reward your child for reading. Give positive praise when books are finished or when reading time is completed.

We have many reading challenges throughout the year in school that students can participate in and we spend a lot of time reading in lessons in school. Support from home in reading for pleasure will work alongside the work we do in school to support text comprehension, grammar, positive reading attitudes, pleasure in reading in later life and increased general knowledge. [2]

To log into SORA:

- Download the SORA app <https://soraapp.com/>
- Select The Chalfonts Community College
- Log in with your school google credentials (you may need to use the set up code: uksecondary)
- Borrow one of the hundreds of titles available for free
- If you or your child require further support or would like further information please contact Mrs Vinten in the LRC.

For more information, please see the following link: <https://help.soraapp.com/en-us/5033.htm>

1. OECD (2010) PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices p. 32-4

2. DfE (May 2012) Research evidence on reading for pleasure Education standards research team p.3

## Safeguarding

I am pleased to confirm that our annual Safeguarding Week will take place from 9th- 13th October. We will be welcoming a number of external speakers to the school to work with students on important safeguarding themes. We will write to you again closer to the time with further information about the week and opportunities for parents and carers to be involved.

## Parent Teacher Association

As parents and carers at The Chalfonts Community College, you are automatically a member of the Parent and Teacher Association. It is a good way to get to know other parents with children in other years and members of staff as well as a way of getting involved in the school. Please read the attached letter from the Chairs of the PTA welcoming new parents into the school community and information on how to contact the PTA. [PTA Welcome letter](#)

I hope you have a good weekend ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Whitehead".

Mrs C Whitehead  
Principal