



# Pinetree Matters

RESPECT

HONESTY

TRUST

KINDNESS

## Message from our Head of School.

The Autumn term is always a hectic term with school relaunching its expectations and pupils settling in following a long summer holiday. But as ever we were always delighted to welcome our pupils back to the school following the break. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the parents and carers who have worked with us to support our pupils in school. We want to welcome our Yr 7 pupils, of whom the majority have settled well, but who I'm sure given time will show us their true potential.

The first term is always a challenging term, often with lots of change, new staff and pupils and lots of pupils who have slipped out of routine over the summer. With this in mind I have been really impressed by the number of pupils who have made progress with both their learning and behaviour this term and I want to congratulate those doing well.

The autumn term is always a busy one for the staff and pupils, and this one has been no different. Whether it has been parents' evenings, college visits, life skills trips or careers Fairs it has been non-stop. Change and fresh starts are always difficult for anyone, so a massive thank you to all who have continued to show high levels of commitment on a daily basis in supporting our learners.

At this time of year, we can often feel the excitement for Christmas, but we also need to remember those who will have a difficult Christmas period; it is at this time when we should reflect and rejoice in what we have and have achieved over the past year. I always like to reflect on successes and challenges faced over the past year. Although for many this Christmas may be difficult, hopefully it will allow us to have more time with those we love and treasure the most.

So often we take those closest to us for granted, so I hope we all spend some quality time with them over the festive period whilst remembering to go easy on the treats.

## Staff News

Many of you will already be aware that Ms Everist has rejoined us following her maternity leave and we are delighted to have her back teaching Art and Yellow house tutor.

We are also really pleased to say that Mrs Adkins will be staying on with us as a RSHE teacher and Yellow House tutor.

## School Community News News

You may be aware that we recently set up a school ASC (Academy Stakeholder committee). This is used to support the school in making school an enjoyable environment for pupils and ensure they make progress. This has already had impact on the school community, talking to pupils and staff and supporting the school to achieve its wider outcomes. We are always looking for new members to join. If this is something you are interested in please get in touch.

## Dates for the Diary

### Term Dates:

School opens: 6 January

School closes 13 February

Half term: 16-20 February

School opens: 23 February

Schools Closes: 27 March

Easter Holidays: 30 March  
— 13 April

### School Events:

12<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January – Yr 11  
Mock Exams

6<sup>th</sup> February – Theme day 3  
– Healthy Lifestyle

12<sup>th</sup> February Yr 7/8  
Parents' evening:

24<sup>th</sup> February Thetford  
Garden Centre Yr 11 visit

5<sup>th</sup> March Year 10/11  
Careers Fayre

20<sup>th</sup> March – Red Nose Day –  
charity day

20<sup>th</sup> March – Theme Day -  
Understanding the Law  
around Rights and  
Responsibility

## Attendance

Our school attendance target is 95%. The overall attendance so far this year is 89%. Thank you to all those families who are working with us to prioritise their child's learning. We appreciate you are working with us to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

The top performing tutor group this term is: Yellow group – well done to them

Our best individual attendance is 100% (one pupil from each of the years 8, 10 and 11). Well done to those three boys.

### HOUSE POINTS SYSTEM

This term the pupils have been really invested in trying to earn not only the highest house point earner of the week – where they can earn a £5 gift voucher, but also to be the Top house. The competition has been fierce and Yellow house and Green House have been neck and neck over this last half term.

With only 3 points in it Yellow house clinched victory with 1330 points!

Congratulations, also goes to our highest earning Boy and Girl, both earning a £10 gift voucher each.

Talulah in Blue House  
Noah in Yellow House

## SPOTLIGHT ON PERSISTENT ABSENCE

What is persistent absence? If your child takes too much time off school, they will become categorised as PA or persistently absent. (Attendance below 90% = persistent absence).

Missing school will make your child fall behind in lessons and will impact on their academic progress and achievement.

Don't allow your child to become a PA student.

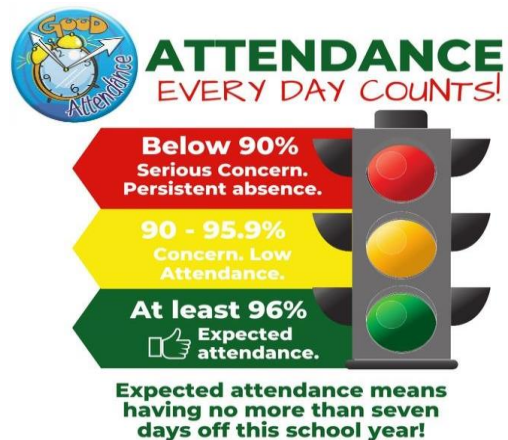
This table shows how many days missed each half-term will make your child a PA student

HOW MANY DAYS OFF WILL MAKE YOUR CHILD A PERSISTENT ABSENCE STUDENT?	
Half-term 1	3 ½ days off school from September until October half-term holiday will make your child a PA student.
Half-term 1-2	7 days off school from September until the Christmas holiday will make your child a PA student.

### How will our school tackle persistent absence?

If your child's attendance has dropped below 90%, school will make contact to raise concern and offer support. An attendance concern letter will be sent to parents, and school will actively consider no longer approving absence unless medical evidence is submitted. School will also access support from the Education Welfare Service.

After this point, if absences continue or improvement in attendance is not sustained, a referral could be made for penalty notice. If the local authority decide that the case meets the criteria to be submitted to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996 for the offence of failing to secure a child's regular attendance at school, a court hearing would be the next step.



## THEME BASED LEARNING DAYS

Theme days this term have been split across the 2 different sides of the school. One side of the school have been studying and looking at E-safety and keeping themselves safe online while others have been focusing on working together. For the internet safety side pupils focused on exploring the full use of media software on desktops and chrome-books and how this can support both their learning and understanding of technology. In Art pupils had a competition to see who can create the best Art either AI or the pupil using a simple set of instructions. There was a clear winner with the pupils Art being far superior in both quality and creativity. This shows AI can't do as well as humans. In PE pupils were using Shot clocks within sport to see what this adds to sport and the way this can influence performance.



The second part of the theme day is Working together. For this pupils of all year groups have attended the escape rooms. The pupils were set into 3 teams all with a couple of members of staff each. As a team they had to work together to get clues to figure out how to find different colours to eventually get the keys to get out. 2 of the 3 groups escaped with the other having to be let out. All the pupils really enjoyed the activity although did find it hard. What was most impressive was the pupils worked excellently together and showed that they can work well as a team when they need to. Those who didn't get out still worked well together but just ran out of time. All pupils represented the school wonderfully and said they really enjoyed the trip and the experience.



## Events and trips

There have been lots of events and trips this term. One of the more recent but really rewarding trips has been to the playground which is an obstacle course where pupils have to complete a set of challenges. Pupils had to work together and show resilience to get over the obstacles and be able to complete the course. As you'll see from the pictures the pupils had a great time and many returned very dirty but had gained a lot from the visit.



As part of their Food Technology lesson Yr pupils had the opportunity to go to the Dads Army Museum as part of their war topic. This trip was particularly exciting for me as I got the opportunity to attend as well, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 2 years. The Year 7 pupils and the Yr 11 Pathway Group who attended were an absolute credit to the school and behaved brilliantly throughout the day whether this was during the tea and cake like in the war or while trying on the various pieces of equipment on offer. Some pupils got into character very quickly and were pretending to take over the world and planning their own world domination. I think we have some budding actors. It was lovely to see the pupils working and interacting together. It was a wonderful trip and well done to all involved.



It's really important our pupils have opportunities they may not otherwise have. This term we have been able to take lots of pupils to places they may not have been before. This has included the victorious Green house going to laser Tag after winning the house competition. We were given the opportunity for all of our pupils to attend the cinema through the light project which the pupils loved. They saw the Karate Kid and the Harold and The Purple Crayon.



It was lovely to see so many pupils wear non-school uniform for "Children in Need" and buying cakes and treats. It was equally lovely to see pupils sharing these, buying for each other and siblings. In total the school raised **£139** for the charity for which we are really pleased.



## Learning in Focus

Over the past few months some of our pupils have been involved in working in collaboration with The Coronation House care home in Thetford. Some of our young people have had the opportunity to go across to the care home and speak with the residents about different things, share their life experiences and generally socialise. Our pupils have benefited from this as they have learnt some key skills around how to cooperate with others, conversations skills and building tolerance towards others. The aim for the school was to also give the residents some understanding of interests and hobbies that young people have today, and we hoped they enjoyed spending time with our pupils as much as our pupils did with them. The pupils who went and engaged did brilliantly and represented the school well.



Pupils have been working on their practical choices working towards their qualifications. Lots of pupils have been continuing with their different projects. It has been brilliant to see lots of the pupils making good progress towards their lessons. Pupils have been working on a range of practical activities including Art, Food Tech, Design and Technology, PE and Music. Many pupils are hoping to continue these subjects at college so it's great to see some of the work the pupils have been producing.



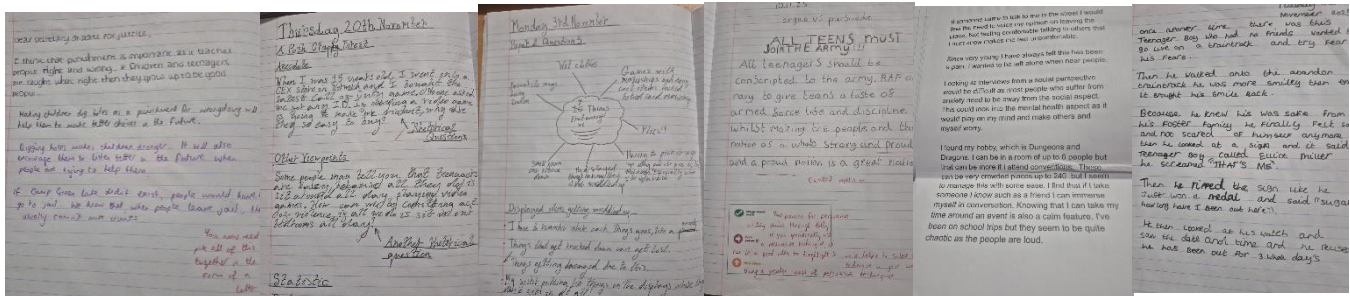
This term in lifeskills the pupils have been taking part in lots of brilliant opportunities. Pupils have been to Lynford lakes, completed assault courses made meals in the kitchen and have been to Thetford town to see a steam museum. All these have supported the pupils in developing their resilience, perseverance, creativity and communication skills.

As the Yr 11s approach the end of their time in school, they are beginning to prepare themselves for the upcoming exams. As you can imagine they are worried about these and thinking about life after school. As a result, the last few weeks of this term has seen the Yr 11s sit their mock exams. All the Yr 11s tried really hard and were a credit to themselves with how hard they worked.



The Pinetree  
School

# PINETREE MATTERS



## Notice Board

Communication between home and school continues to be a vital way of ensuring that both parties are informed of any attendance/trips/issues and any other information that needs to be shared to ensure our pupils achieve their full potential and are fully supported.

As you are aware, there are several ways in which we can communicate: via telephone, email, letter, Website, Parents Events. The school telephone number is 01842 752756 and email address is [office@pin.unity-ed.uk](mailto:office@pin.unity-ed.uk)

First Day Calling messages are now sent via Arbor.

As you are aware the safety and well-being of your child/ward is paramount to us at school. Therefore, it is imperative that the school is informed if your child is going to be absent from school, (please contact the school on the day as early as possible using one of the above procedures, a message can be left). Alternatively, please acknowledge our telephone call, email or message. If it is a medical appointment then evidence of the appointment is required.

If there are any changes in home circumstances e.g. change of address, telephone number etc. please contact the school so we can update our records.

Dinners are ordered daily and pupils should pay on the day or in advance – payment can be made via cheque or BACS (please contact the school office for the BACS details) Dinners cost **£2.65** per day.