



Dear Parents

19 January 2024

Internal exams are drawing to a close and I wish everyone involved the very best possible outcome. Next week, normal teaching will resume, but first focussing on exam feedback and learning points. As I stated last week, I urge all families to view internal exams as a way of spotting gaps in knowledge and understanding and putting in place corrective measures. It is definitely a case of process over grade or score. For S5 in particular, having the mocks in January allows ample time to fix any issues arising.

Assembly happened as normal during exam week, and the day happened to fall on 'Blue Monday', the third Monday in January, which is argued to be the saddest day of the year. Whether you subscribe to this idea or not, the rationale appears to be the cold and wet weather, short and dark days, the end of the Christmas season, and maybe some failed resolutions too. The assembly began with a trip back to 1983 and the song 'Blue Monday' by New Order, which reached number 9 in the charts.

We then moved on to the manifestations of seasonal sadness and discussed low motivation, low energy levels, low mood and arguments with friends and family, and other possible symptoms. I suggested that someone with a fixed mindset might accept this as the status quo, whereas someone with a growth mindset might look for solutions, such as taking in daylight and Vitamin D and stimulating serotonin in the brain, staying active and releasing endorphins in the body, sleeping well and being more productive, avoiding unrealistic resolutions, starting a new hobby or learning something new to boost self-confidence and achievement, and the power of positive affirmations, for example, *attitude is a choice, attitude is everything*.

The word of the week is in fact, 'affirmation', and the question of the week became a challenge, and that is one (original) affirmation from each class in the school: a saying, quote or thought that might remind us daily of the benefits of being positive. In fact, the Year 3, 5 and S4 affirmations have just landed on my desk, and they are:

Year 3: *Don't believe your brain, believe your heart and your heart will lead you to your destination.*

Year 5: *Live life with gratitude and happiness will find you.*

S4: *If you're kind and polite, the world will be right.* (source: Paddington 2)

A representative from each class will read out their affirmation in next week's assembly.

One I particularly remember relates to how I feel about resolutions and reflects my comments in last week's newsletter, *the perfect moment is this one*.

Turning to the weather, we are currently in a period of very cold to freezing conditions, and I do advise all to wear appropriate winter clothing. If you are in any doubt about choice of coat, hat and other items, then please check the uniform list or call the School Office for help. The number of pupils who tell me how cold they are when not wearing a coat, or wearing one but not fastening it up, is staggering. That said, those that come in through the Whippingham Road gate each morning bring me great joy with their daily greetings and smiles. Our pupils are an absolute delight and a credit to themselves, their families and Priory School. Well done all.



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Thinking of *prospective* pupils, please note that our Open Days this year will take place as follows:

Junior School: Wednesday 6 March, 9am – 12pm

Senior School: Wednesday 24 April, 9am – 12pm

If you know of family members or friends with children who are relocating, starting school or moving school, then please do pass on the dates and invitation to attend. Of course, you are very welcome to come along too. The format is a tour of the school with a prefect followed by an informal gathering with members of the School Leadership Team in the Hall. There are no formal speeches.

If your son or daughter has enjoyed achievements outside of school, for example, cadets, rowing, acting, writing and many more, then please send in details and I will try to include the news in this publication. If sending in a photograph, I cannot use it if it includes people who are not part of our school community. Please do not feel that these achievements have to be of Olympic or Nobel Peace Prize magnitude – they categorically do not.

Similarly, please do remember that I am always on the lookout for Tuesday Talks, and if you would like to share information on your job, vocation or interests, then I would love to hear from you. Talks take place most Tuesdays from 11.30am until 12.10pm, including time for Q&A. Thus, speakers talk for no more than 30 minutes, and the age of the audience can be altered given the nature of the talk.

Reports

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| 1. Mon 15 Jan | Senior School Exam Week Commenced |
| 2. Tues 16 Jan | S1/S2 Girls, Hockey Match, Free School |

Future Dates & Events

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| 1. Mon 22 Jan | Senior School Academic Reviews Week Commences |
| 2. Mon 22 Jan | S3/S4/S5 Information Evening For Poland Trip (4.15pm) |
| 3. Tues 23 Jan | S1/S2 Boys, Rugby Match (home game v Free School) |
| 4. Wed 24 Jan | S3/S4/S5 Mixed, Rugby Match, Free School |
| 5. Fri 26 Jan | Mufti Day & Cake Sale (Ability Dogs Charity) |
| 6. Fri 26 Jan | Y5/Y6 Girls, Football Match, Godshill Primary School |

David EJJ Lloyd
Principal