

Introduction from Mr R Owen, Headteacher

So, here we are again! Our regular newsletter has returned. Who would have thought that way back in March, we would be here again with the whole school on-line, exams cancelled again and the Maplesden community working away on MS Teams? This time, we have advanced our virtual learning approach with live lessons across year groups and new and improved ways of learning online. As before our students, staff and parents are all working hard to ensure the best possible standards for all and I am so grateful to all of you.

I'd like to apologise to Year 11 parents who experienced frustration last week because the parents evening company's server crashed. I know that many parents will have made sure they were available and this is very frustrating particularly as Year 11 need clarity at this difficult time. We will of course, reschedule and will keep you updated when we have organised a new date. I will be speaking with the parents evening software company and will expect some answers!

In the meantime, Year 11 and Year 13 students need to keep working hard as it looks as though the work students produce

from January through to July will be an important piece of evidence in determining final grades. The government's proposals around exam replacement have not been published yet but Year 11 and Year 13 students need to keep maintaining high standards and must not hesitate to ask for support from their teachers.

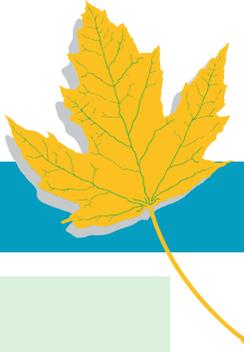
I would like to say a huge thankyou to those parents who have volunteered to help administer our Lateral Flow Devise testing. Due to constantly changing Government guidance, the scale of the testing has diminished to just those students and staff on site, so we have not needed quite as many helpers as was first anticipated but it maybe that we ask for your help in the future if schools are expected to test all pupils when they return to on-site learning. Your response to our request for help was just fantastic, thank you so much. Those students and staff on site (students of key workers and vulnerable students) were tested by us last week successfully. Thank you to everyone involved. To the students who were all so mature about taking the test and to the amazing staff and volunteers who are now administering the tests weekly, I am so grateful. It's amazing how there is basically

nothing that Maplesden can't turn its hand to! I must admit that when I started this role, I never thought that this would be part of what was expected!

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and I hope you and your families are all safe and well.

Best wishes

Mr R Owen
Headteacher



Year 11 & 10

Year 11

Thank you for your engagement with Virtual Parents' Evening last week; it is great to see so many people commit to the 'new normal' in the face of such difficult times.

A gentle reminder that post-16 applications must be completed through Kent Choices within the next week – if you are having trouble then please get in contact.

Year 11 students have done phenomenally well of late, keeping up to date with classwork and assessments in order to provide us with potential evidence for summer grading. As soon as there is more clarity from the government, we will be sure to keep everyone informed. In the meantime, please encourage students to keep going every day, it really makes a difference!

Mr J Davies
Head of Year 11

Year 10

Working from home again isn't what we want to be doing, but it is the best way of us keeping safe! Home study at the moment is vital for Year 10 and it is imperative that all students are attending all virtual lessons and trying their very best.

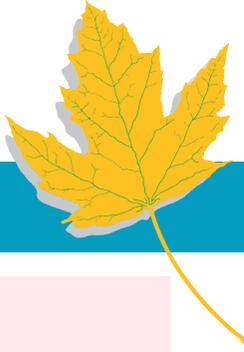
The best advice I can give is to stick to a daily routine: get up, have breakfast, get dressed and attend all lessons on Teams! In the afternoon, have some time for yourself; **why not try these 'happiness boosters':**

- Journaling
- Expressing gratitude
- Exercise
- Savouring happy memories
- Surround yourself with 3 'P's': Photos, Plants and Pets
- 3 kind acts and 3 good things
- Meditation

We are continuing with the same system as we did last year by sending positive emails home. I would like to see subject teachers rewarding even more of these, so students must keep working and putting in the effort.

Year 10 should have created their Unifrog accounts and started to complete the relevant tasks; students have been contacted about this but as a reminder, the deadline is the 31st January. For those of you who aren't aware of what Unifrog can offer, it is an online careers platform.

Miss H Fraser-Thompson
Head of Year 10



Year 9 & 8

Hello Year 9 parents and students!

I hope you and your families are well during this difficult time.

In our first newsletter piece back since the last lockdown I thought it would be nice to highlight our year group positives this term so far and give you a joke to use around the house! Remember if you need support you can contact us through the 'Worry' button on the school's website. Please ensure that your son/daughter looks at the Year 9 assembly page on Teams where details on support is available along with a weekly joke! So far this term we have sent home a whopping 149 positive messages with so many of you working hard. We appreciate all of your engagement keep up the good work! Your joke for this newsletter is:

Why did the invisible man turn down the job offer? He couldn't see himself doing it.

That one is sure to catch a laugh around the dinner table! Enjoy.

Mr J Birchall
Head of Year

Hello Year 8

Here we are again in another lockdown. I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well and you're finding ways to stay positive and entertained!

I know so many of you have adapted amazingly to working on Teams again. I'm really impressed with some of the amazing pieces of work that you have been working on. Hopefully you can all take one positive thing out of lockdown, whether it be learning how to cook a meal or how to use a washing machine or just building new levels of resilience - I'm sure your parents will be impressed!

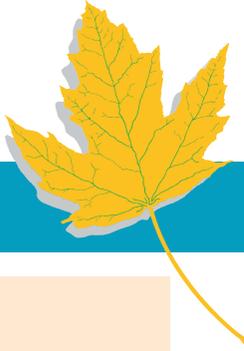
Remember if you are finding home learning difficult you can message your form tutors and use the 'worry button' on the school website. We are here to support you where we can, and you will not be the only ones finding life difficult (myself included!).

On a positive note, it was amazing to issue so many positive letters home over the past couple of weeks, with many of you receiving letters from multiple members of staff. Please keep up the good work!

Hopefully, we are starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. Remember to keep in contact with each other, a text or a phone call can really lift someone's mood. Stay active and look after yourselves and I look forward to seeing you all as soon as possible!

Stay safe,

Mr S Chapman
Head of Year 8



Year 7 & Careers

Year 7

I want to say a big thank you as your efforts toward online learning have been excellent! I have recently contacted your parents to state how impressed I am. Keep it up, it will be worth it in the long run!

It has been fantastic to issue so many positive letters home over the past couple of weeks. Year 7 has had over 150 nominations with some students receiving multiple nominations from different subjects – well done! If you have not yet received a positive letter, keep working hard and impressing your teachers with your effort and you may earn a positive letter next week.

Please remember, if you are having any difficulties with online learning or you have any concerns at all please contact your Form Tutor and/or use the 'Worry Button' on the school website. We are all here to help you as we would in school.

Keep working hard and staying positive.

Best wishes to all students and your families.

Mr B Williams
Head of Year 7

Careers

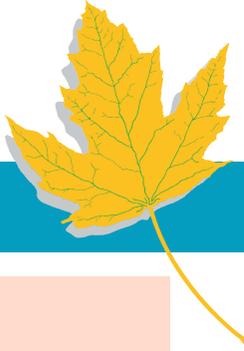
We have successfully rolled out the online Careers platform, Unifrog, to our Year 9 and 10 students (it is already used within our Year 11 and Sixth Form).

Students will be able to access the online platform which has an extensive Careers library, a personality and interest quiz along with a competencies tool that will prompt students to record their achievements through their school journey. Unifrog also has information on Post 14 and Post 16 choices which will allow students to explore and to reach decisions on the pathways available to them. Unifrog will help support the Careers lessons already delivered through RSE lessons.

Where you end up after school is in your hands.

Log in to Unifrog today.

unifrog unifrog.org/sign-in



PE Department

The PE department would like to thank parents for their continued support in encouraging students to take part in regular physical activity.

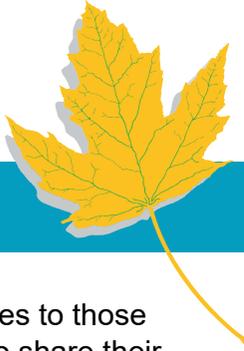
Physical activity has a number of physical and mental health benefits, as highlighted in the poster below.



The PE department are setting active practical lessons for core PE and students are asked to upload evidence each lesson for staff to review. Students are given a number of options for their lessons, including activities such as going for a walk, jog or bike ride, or exercises completed at home, which do not require equipment. These activities are posted as an assignment and all students are expected to engage and participate in these lessons.

In addition to this, the PE department are posting a virtual Box Fit club every Monday and we ask that you encourage your son/daughter to get involved, learn the basic boxing skills whilst getting fit and having fun!





Philosophy Department

I would like to thank Year 11 and 13 students as they have remained focused and commitment to achieving the highest possible grades/outcomes, even with the recent messages from the government regarding exams and grades.

Back in November we welcomed Miss Endacott to the department. She has brought fresh ideas to the department and the students have really benefited from those ideas.

[Here is a message from Miss Endacott:](#)

As a trainee teacher who joined the school in November, I have been impressed by students' bright and friendly nature. All students have made me feel incredibly welcome and I'd like to thank each of them for that.

Year 11 have just completed their mocks and, in response to those, we have been working on even more exam question practice and really developing their writing technique. Students have been learning how to mark model answers as if they were an examiner, giving them a better understanding of what is required of them. They have then been applying this to writing and improving their own answers.

Recently we had a Vicar come and virtually visit Year 11 by joining their Teams lesson. Students came up with some very good

questions to ask him which were relevant to their GCSE course and really challenged him. After the session, the Vicar fed back to us and said, "I really enjoyed doing it and was impressed by the quality of the questions", which is a testament to our students' ability and welcoming natures.

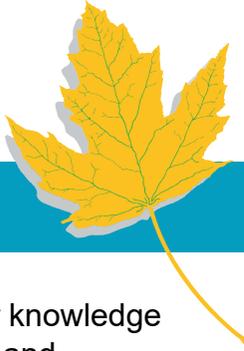
Year 10 have just finished their Religion, Peace and Conflict topic, and are now moving on to starting the Religion, Crime and Punishment topic. The first lesson of this topic was on good and bad actions, and students had an impressively detailed discussion around the nature of good and evil, what counts as an evil act and how you can judge whether an act is good or bad, taking into account whether the intention of the action makes a difference. They were then evaluating whether particular events and actions were good or evil, such as the recent storming of the Capitol Building in the United States and whether abusing an animal is better or worse than hurting or killing a human and why, demonstrating high level evaluation and analytical skills.

They have also been working through the Islam Practices workbook that they completed during the first lockdown, checking that their answers are accurate and discussing anything they weren't sure of or wanted to share extra detail on.

For this a particular thank you goes to those students who have been willing to share their personal experience in order to help the class understand particular beliefs and concepts in more detail and consider how they look in real life rather than just in the classroom.

This term Year 9 have been looking at the Disney Pixar film *Coco*, which depicts the Day of the Dead (*Día de los Muertos*). They first considered a variety of different views around the idea of life after death, learning about new traditions that they may not have encountered before and evaluating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each view. We then went on to consider the Day of the Dead specifically, where it came from and why people celebrate it. We considered the symbolism used in *Coco* and the different elements that go into the Day of the Dead.

I have been impressed by the students' developing evaluation skills which were especially showcased during a discussion about whether the film *Coco* counts as cultural appropriation and therefore whether Disney Pixar should have made the film at all. The students were able to come up with arguments both for and against *Coco* being cultural appropriation, considering arguments that they may not have agreed with themselves, and then each come to a judgement about what they think.



Drama & Dance Department

Drama Department

Firstly, a huge well done to all those students who are really engaging with their Drama tasks. Especially Year 7 & 8 who, before Christmas, had to work out 'Who Shot Santa?'. Well done to all those students who guessed that it was the jealous elf. He has been apprehended and held without bail or chance of escape.

This term, each year group will be looking at different topics:

Year 7 Abstract and physical theatre (it could get strange)

Year 8 Melodrama (families you may be called on to help with this one)

Year 9 Finishing up Hamilton The Musical (I am not throwing away my shot)

Year 10 Continuing with Components 1 & 2 (every piece of work is evidence)

Year 11 – Component 3 Responding to a Brief (every piece of work is evidence)

Year 12 – Unit 2 Developing Skills and Techniques for Live Performance

Year 13 – Unit 3 group workshop performance

It certainly is a jam-packed term, I hope we can fit it all in.

Until next time, stay safe.

Mrs K Palmer
Head of Drama

Dance Department

I am extremely proud of how students have applied themselves since we have returned from the Christmas break.

This term, Year 7 are looking at their first professional work 'EoE', Year 8 are finishing off their 'Urban Dance' unit and Year 9 are looking at Boy Blue Entertainment's 'Emancipation of Expressionism'.

Year 10 are busy developing their choreographic knowledge and working on how to approach exam questions; this includes studying the next professional GCSE work, 'Artificial Things'. Year 11 are working on their individual choreographies and revising the anthology.

Sixth Form are developing their knowledge on different dance practitioners and working on strategies for devising. As you can see, at a distance, lots of learning is still taking place!

I have seen some fantastic practical and written submissions via Teams and myself, Mr Kelly and Miss Russell have been very impressed. We have awarded numerous VAAs and will continue to do so.

'Workout Wednesday Videos' will be posted in Teams every Wednesday (funny that!). Form Tutors will post the link into their Form Groups (this is currently for Years 7, 8 and 9). The first one was made available this week. Watch this space for what we will be doing for our upper year groups!

Stay safe everyone.

Miss H Fraser-Thompson
Head of Dance