RE: End of Autumn Term 1

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is my pleasure to be writing to you at the end of our first half term in Year 9. Your young people are doing amazingly and have settled into life in Ferndown Upper School brilliantly. The year team and wider staff body are really impressed with their attitude to learning, punctuality, behaviour and engagement in lessons, and it already feels like they are an essential part of our Ferndown Family.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the 'Meet the Tutor' evening in September; I hope you found it useful. Thank you also for your support at home and for communicating with us when you are having issues, or keeping us updated on sporting successes, appointments and anything you feel would be important for us to know. Please continue to do this using our headofyear9@fernup.dorset.sch.uk email, so that you reach the whole Year 9 Team. All students should now be on Bromcom, Outlook and Teams, and parents on MCAS. If you are still having connection issues, please do get in touch.

Success and our Year 9 Ethos - #UnearthYourPotential

As a reminder of our specific points of focus for the year, please see our priority skills and attributes below:

- **S**elf-belief – Developing confidence in themselves and their abilities
- **H**ard work – Understanding the importance of hard work in success
- **I**nitiative – Building independence and resourcefulness
- **N**urture – Looking after themselves and one another, both socially and academically
- **E**xcellence – Aiming for their personal best in everything that they do



Over the year, we will be focusing on these in assemblies and tutor tasks, as well as linking them to other experiences that take place. We have already started to do this through the Year 9 assemblies, which have included visits from the Royal Navy and The Dorset Mental Health Support Team.

The Year 9 Team have been delighted at the positivity on display and the success that so many of our cohort have had so far. We have seen plenty of students hit the Bronze Award for House Points, and at the time of writing, there have been **15,183 positive events recorded** on Bromcom for Year 9 students since 1st September, with many of these resulting in more than 1 House Point being issued. This is in comparison to **only 845 negative events** in the same period of time. Staff at Ferndown Upper School are always keen to give praise, and Year 9 are clearly giving them plenty of reasons to issue it!

There are so many students that have left a positive impression on the team, but some of the many names that have really stood out to us are: Farron V, Maeve W, Charlie C, Kasey T, Bryan O, Pavlo K, Inga B, Elsie B, Weza G-L, Adam B, Tyler A, Lily P, Amelia L, Max R, Ryan T, Matilda B, Sienna B, Reilly B, Dineth G-R and Maisie W.

Each week, the Year 9 Team recognise students who are demonstrating the above values through a list, which is shared in the student bulletin each week and celebrated in school.

Our Heads of House are also delighted with the amount of praise points that Year 9 are receiving and their participation in the tutor and house challenges, all of which are counting towards the House points total. Year 9 often have a key role in the fate of this competition, and it is already getting very competitive, with all Heads of House wishing to gain the House Cup, Charity Cup and Sports Day Cup over the course of the year.

It has been fantastic to see so many students attend extra-curricular clubs, and I have been reliably informed that there are high hopes for our school football and netball teams this year, with some very positive recent results. Details of all clubs can be found in the student bulletin each week and this is always posted on the Year 9 Teams page, amongst other notices, so students can always access any key information/opportunities they may need.

If your child has not yet engaged with any lunchtime or after school clubs, we would just like to remind you that as a school we offer a late bus, which can be booked in reception and is primarily designed to support attendance at these clubs. We are the only school in the area to do this and spaces can be limited.

Finally, on the topic of opportunities, we would also like to say a massive thank you to all of our Year 9 students who volunteered at our recent School Open Evening. They were all fantastic and a real credit to our school, so please make sure their contributions have been recognised by the relevant departments!

Key dates

To keep you in the loop as we begin the busy approach to Christmas, here are a few reminders of important dates this half term:

- **Wednesday 4th November** – Early finish at 1.20pm (due to 6th form open evening)
- **Friday 27th November** – INSET day
- **Tuesday 8th December** – School Christmas lunch
- **Wed 9th December** – Christmas concert - St Mary's church at 6.30pm
- **Fri 18th December** – End of term (early finish)

I hope you have a fantastic and restful half term break, and we look forward to seeing students back on Monday 2nd November.

Kind Regards,

Mr Rob Howard

Head of Year 9