Care and Guidance Report – November 2023

Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral): Miss Fiona Harrison

It has been another busy start to the year for all our year groups. MCH continues to be a fabulous support as Senior Pastoral Leader. She now takes the lead on attendance, and standards. We have worked hard on uniform standards, and we now run a 'late gate' – where we have conversations with students who are late and arrange consequences if this is behaviour is repeated. We also have the wonderful Mrs Maslin offering a friendly ear.

In years 7 to 11, we have had various events already. It all started with the Year 7 students' first day. They completed team building/ice breaker activities - alongside the traditional 'treasure hunt'. NLE worked closely with her tutors, nurturing our newest students. They have all settled in well and when help has been needed NLE has been there. She has even run a 'Choc and chat' group for any students who need a little help with friendships. SCL and HBR have worked hard to build relationships with their year group following their appointment. They started the year with a fabulous speech at Meet the Tutor Evening – and they have put into practice their promises to the parents. Year 9 have already put their heart and soul into House Karaoke and BCO has been working closely with them to allay any of their Year 9 worries. He has built brilliant relationships with the students in his year group with SEND needs and/or extreme anxiety. – helping them to access their learning. Year 10 have thrown themselves into their GCSE studies. VGO and JST continue to support their year group – working beautifully together. They have accompanied the geography trip to Epping and ran a brilliant assembly on taking responsibility for your words – where they showed via toothpaste tubes that once something is out it is very hard to put it back in! CBU has taken on our Year 11 cohort following a change in staff. She has quickly cemented relationships, as well as planning this year's Leadership Conference – which was another triumph! She is currently supporting the students through their mock examinations – alongside looking at attendance and interventions.

It has been an interesting start for the Sixth Form. Year 12's transition has been expertly facilitated by EHI. She has worked hard to ensure new students have felt supported - alongside facilitating the transition from 11 to 12 for those students who have always been with us. They enjoyed a day teambuilding on the first day – with impromptu Karaoke performances in the afternoon. Since then, we have had Meet the Tutor Evening, welcome meetings, wellbeing surveys and various assemblies - making sure all students feel supported in their next steps. The sixth form year leaders have implemented a new attendance strategy – giving prizes in assembly for 100% attendance. The students love it – when the attendance wheel of fortune spins! The Year 13 team have been incredibly busy supporting UCAS applications and early entries. They have been working with the new format and referencing system. RCO's office is never empty – the students know she is there, and they go to her whenever they need a kind word or support. She has supported a significant safeguarding issue over the past few months, and she has done this with unfaltering dedication. The year 13 students have just earned their right to go home early, but know privileges can be revoked if they are late, wear incorrect uniform, etc. This is now monitored via a 'Home Study Pass'.

In all year groups the range and seriousness of pastoral issues which are presented to the team continue to be challenging – however we keep learning and talking so we can best support our students.

Counselling and School Nurse Provision

We continue to use Renew Counselling service. 20 hours of counselling a week. This is constantly under review to ensure that we get the best value for money. If students are ill – then we use the spaces for drop-in sessions – which works well. We also use CARA. We continue to have been have monthly visits from the school nurse this term. We have various students accessing various other services. We also have the wonderful JST doing Art Therapy sessions – which is working well. I am amazed by these sessions and what they unlock.

Safeguarding

All staff continue to be vigilant and inform me if they have any concerns. These are then recorded on MyConcern. I run a weekly Pastoral Briefing for Year Leaders – these are invaluable as it gives the team the opportunity to share good practice. It also gives us a chance to discuss if anything needs addressing before the weekend. Furthermore, we have just given staff time to do an online Prevent refresher. I am also giving staff weekly safeguarding questions – which are then discussed at tutor briefings/line manager meetings.

MyConcern

MyConcern continues to be a great investment and is used effectively by all staff. **All staff are aware** how to report a concern on the **electronic system.** The DSL, Fiona Harrison and DDSL, Stephen Lawlor, Jo Cross, Michael Palmer, Marion Chumbley, Nina Lewis can all see concerns raised on the system, which also analyses referrals and the nature of a concern. **All concerns are** logged electronically and reviewed – and timely and appropriate referrals are made to Social Care or Family Support. Child in Need, MARACs, TAFs and Child Protection Case Conferences are always attended by School.

Free School Meals

Parents are reminded, via every School newsletter, of the path to apply for Free School Meals. This information is also on the School website.

Year Leaders

All Year Leaders deal with individual pastoral problems as they arise, including extended illnesses, family and friendship issues, accusations of bullying, misuse of the internet and occasions of suspected theft. They liaise with students and parents to resolve issues and ensure that all of their girls are working to the best of their ability. They continue to monitor the progress and attainment of the students in their year group to ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable them to address issues as early as possible. They provide an action plan for those students who need support after each round of TA Data. Year Leaders also play an active role in their Meet the Tutor Evening and their relevant Parents' Evening. Year Leaders meet regularly and are confident in their support of their cohort.

Year 7 – Miss Nina Lewis

Our latest cohort of 180 Year 7 students have made a smooth transition from primary school and are coping well with new demands. For some it has taken a little longer to find their feet and as a result we introduced "Choc & Chat"; a Monday morning get together for a hot chocolate and a welcoming space for students to make new friends. This has been a great success!

There was a great turnout at the New Parents' Welcome meeting in September and parental engagement was fantastic during the tutor sessions. Parents have responded well to the key messages given and communication with parents so far has been extremely positive.

The Elevate programme took place at the start of term and was received well by the Year 7s. This provided transition support with a focus on organisation and study skills.

Extra-curricular clubs for Year 7 are very well attended and the first Year 7 led student club, Mystery Club, was launched at the end of October. Year 7 have also been busy baking in support of the Autumn Halloween Fair where they helped to raise just under £300 for charity.

As per usual, attendance at house events has been incredible and the support the students show for each other is a testament to the energy and encouragement from their tutors. This year we have welcomed Miss Guy, Mrs Pillai and Mrs Howard.

The Halloween Disco was a hit, the Year 7s really enjoyed the event. The pantomime is due to take place in December and the Year 7s are incredibly excited about their first trip out of school.

Year 8 – Mrs Sarah Clements & Mrs Hayley Barker

It has been a busy term for our brand-new team. We are both in our first term as year leader and five of our eight tutors are new to the school and have been a great addition to the team. This term, the year group have enjoyed getting to know their tutors and vice versa.

So far this year, the students have taken part in activities exploring their hobbies and personal goals. Two forms have already planned and delivered an assembly, both of which were creative and entertaining, and the other forms are currently preparing for these. Additionally, we have encouraged the students to enter an external poetry competition called 'This is Me' where the winners will have their poems published. We were absolutely delighted to receive so many fantastic entries – they certainly are a talented group of writers. We eagerly await the results!

We have chosen the phrase, "Make it Happen," as our year group mantra and the students and tutors have enjoyed singing along to the Flashdance "What a Feeling Song" with Irene Cara! We think the phrase sums up desire to encourage growing independence in the students as they enter their teenage years. We want to foster an ethos of active self-motivation and, we are already seeing this spirit prosper among the students. For instance, one group of girls established their own new scrapbooking club and have a large and enthusiastic team of year sevens attending every week.

As always, House Karaoke was a prominent feature of the first half term where every form suddenly turned into professional choreographers or choirmasters! They had a great time and the final performances were exceptional, with smiles all round. The Dance Show and Christmas Concert are both getting ever closer and, as such, the girls are running from one rehearsal to another and excitedly talking about these events to come.

Pastorally, we have a number of students requiring support with their wellbeing. They are supported by their form tutors and the entire pastoral team as well as the excellent counselling providers we now have in school.

We have both thoroughly enjoyed our first term and look forward to a challenging and fulfilling year!

Year 9 – Mr Bradley Copper

I am delighted to share with you a summary of the exciting academic and enriching activities that our Year 9 students have been engaged in thus far in the autumn term of this academic year.

The term's Enrichment highlight for the year group was a vibrant 'Culture Fest' Enrichment Day, where students explored and celebrated their diverse and wide-ranging cultural backgrounds through workshops, performances, and interactive sessions. We even had some local celebrities in, courtesy of Mrs. Watt! This event aimed to foster cultural awareness and understanding among the students, providing them with a broader perspective on the world and each-other. It also intersected with a range of performances, as a part of both Culture Fest at large and our Black Excellence afternoon. Our Year 9 students have also showcased their athletic prowess in a variety of sports events: from thrilling inter-house competitions to competitive matches, the girls have displayed exceptional sportsmanship and teamwork. These events not only promote physical wellbeing but also encourage a sense of camaraderie and healthy competition among our students—a highlight, surely, of this school.

This competitive spirit reached new heights with House Events such as the hotly-contested House Karaoke, a little earlier than usual this year, and more recently with a wonderfully rowdy House Indoor Athletics. These events not only allowed the students to showcase their talents but also served as platforms for continuing to build strong bonds within their forms. The enthusiasm and energy displayed by the girls were truly commendable. This is all alongside a strong academic rigour to our usual proceedings, with a newly updated Registration timetable that spends considerable time on

preparing students to organise and prepare their work as they advance toward their Options choices. And it goes without saying that student-run clubs continue as always, too, with some particularly vibrant Year 9 contributions to Astronomy Club and STEM Leaders.

At our school, the wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance. Our dedicated Form Tutors play a crucial role in providing pastoral care, ensuring that each student feels supported and valued. Regular check-ins, open communication channels, and a focus on mental health contribute to creating a nurturing environment where students can thrive academically and emotionally. As we reflect on the accomplishments and experiences of Year 9 in this autumn term, we are proud to witness the growth, resilience, and unity of our students. We look forward to the continued success and wellbeing of these young individuals as they progress through their academic journey into the rest of the year.

Year 10 – Mrs Jo Stevens & Mrs Victoria Goksel

We have had a good start to year for Year 10, with Mrs Goksel and I well into our Year Leader roles and much more familiar with our students and their individual needs. Having started their GCSE options there were quite a few last-minute changes, but all students now are settled into their chosen subjects. The jump from Year 9 to 10 has been a big change for some of them, but with some requested sensitivity around homework in a few departments, this appears to have settled down now, as they find their new rhythm.

From a pastoral view point the year group unfortunately continues to have a number of significant pastoral concerns. There is currently 1 student with long term absence from school, which external agencies are now involved with and hopefully sourcing a private referral for a diagnosis and in turn EHCP. We also have long term absence from lesson, for another student, due to SEND and SEMH, this is a complex situation which the school have been working hard to find solutions to. One further student is continuing to struggle with poor mental and physical health, which is impacting their ability to remain in lesson and at times attend school. We are very hopeful that with the right help these students will gradually return to a position where they can access their education. Heidi Pocock is working hard to formally assess and put in place New Ways of Working for several students with suspected SEN needs as well as updating previous ones. We are continuing to work collaboratively with the SEN departments and parents by also undertaking some 'One Plan' meetings with parents to ensure we are best supporting those students. This has already had a positive impact for some students that were previously struggling. The tutor team continue to work brilliantly with us and their tutor groups, recognising and supporting students that need it.

On a positive note, we have also had some fun this term. We have enjoyed the House Karaoke and Culture Festival performances as well as some exciting trips. Different groups attended the Tate Modern with the Art Department and Epping Forest. Our programme of activities during form time remains varied with activities which now span across a 2-weekly timetable. This has allowed us more time to ensure that the tutors can check in with their classes, with additional time for wellbeing, whole school activities and some really fun assemblies- where Mrs Goksel arranged an exciting activity involving a toothpaste challenge!

We are both continuing to thoroughly enjoy roles, we are getting to know the students better each day and finding way to support, encourage and inspire them.

Year 11 – Miss Charlotte Burnham

Year 11 have just finished probably one of the busiest half terms this year. In between the hard work they have been putting in, in preparation for their mocks they have also been busying planning and organising the Leadership Conference.

This year our conference was titled 'A World of Opportunities'. The students wanted a focus on having a whole range of speakers from different industries. This year we had one ex-student from a diversity role, another speaker who has an OBE, one speaker from an entrepreneur side and lastly a speaker from the BBC. All incredibly interesting and coming from a whole range of industries.

Aside from all of this they have been busy with all of their extracurricular; music and the upcoming concerts, drama and the upcoming production, dance and the dance show and of course so many different sporting activities. Following on from this they have had an English enrichment day and many house events.

Year 12 – Mrs Emma Hiett

This term we have welcomed 151 students into Year 12, including 35 students who have joined us from other secondary schools. The initial weeks of term were focused on settling all students into the Sixth Form, establishing routines, and ensuring everybody was on the right A Level courses. As is usual there were a fair amount of option changes to discuss and process, as well as this year an unusual amount of movement with students both leaving and joining the school in the first week or so of term.

Our new students are always a priority in this induction period, as they need additional support settling into a new environment and establishing new relationships with both staff and their peer group. This year we have done this in several ways, including our traditional induction day for all Year 12 students with icebreaker activities and various briefings, the Freshers Fair at which the huge range of extra-curricular activities are showcased, as well as a series of opportunities for the new students to meet as a group to provide reassurance and information, and plenty of opportunities for questions. This year we have introduced an informal Year 12/13 buddy system, with last year's 'new' Year 13 students meeting with their Year 12 counterparts to chat about their experiences and share advice about all manner of things from making friends to coping with workload and accessing support.

Immediately after half term a monitoring exercise gathered feedback from subject teachers on selected Year 12 students, including those new to the school, disadvantaged students and those who entered the Sixth Form following an appeal. The feedback was in the main positive, indicating students are settling in well and getting to grips with their A Level courses. A small number of mainly minor issues have been uncovered, for example to do with organisation or homework submission, which have been followed up the Year 12 tutor team.

The Year 12 tutors have played a vital role this term in settling students in, helping them establish good study habits, supporting their wellbeing and addressing issues with uniform, attendance and punctuality, as well as leading sessions on Mindset, Life Skills, Careers and PSHE through the form time and RTP programmes. All parents were offered the opportunity to meet their children's tutor and gain some insight into what life in the Sixth Form looks like at the Year 12 Meet the Tutor evening in September. At the time of writing we are looking forward to welcoming these parents back into school next week for the Year 12 Parents Evening.

Year 13 – Mrs Rhiannon Connolly

Year 13 have had a busy start to the academic year but all have settled quickly back into routine. A large number of students (approximately 75) have applied early to UCAS so many of the early weeks were spent writing and rewriting personal statements. Since applications were submitted entrance tests have been prepared for and sat. Some ran smoothly, others didn't, caused by circumstances beyond our control and were well documented in the press. This did cause the students some added stress. On a more positive note, offers have started to come through for their many of their choices and interviews are starting to be offered. All students applying for Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry or any course at the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge will have subject specialist interviews arranged for them in school. We are now turning our attention to support those students who are applying to other universities and courses. The students are very grateful to Mrs Hopkins and their form tutors for their support and guidance in this process.

In January the Year 13s will sit their final set of formal mock examinations. Mrs Hassan has compiled their timetable and together with Miss Pocock has ensured all students who require rest breaks, extra time and other adjustments have been well considered. Students are aware of the grades they will need to achieve by the end of the year and are currently working hard towards these.