



CHANNING

Word from the Head

6 September 2021

Dear Parents

I am so pleased to be writing to you on the first day of the new academic year with all kinds of news and updates for 2021-22. This is going to be a rather long missive, but an important one - please do keep going all the way to the end!

First, it may come as a surprise to many of you to learn that we have already had our first school occasion of the year: the Year 13 Leavers' Ball took place last Thursday evening and it was a joy to be able to share their celebrations at the end of their Channing school careers. My enormous thanks to Mrs Neelam Tulsiani and Mr Kouros Kyriacou for organising such a splendid event, which the girls, parents and staff all enjoyed so much.

We are extremely proud of the year group's excellent A level results (of which you can see more [here](#)) and, more importantly, that they are all going on now to do what they wanted to do, whether that is university, art foundation or a gap year. Their chosen destinations and courses demonstrate the diverse and eclectic interests and passions of Channing students: they include everything from Law, History and Classics through Economics, Languages and Business-related courses to Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Evolutionary Biology. We have girls going to study Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and Criminology; Musical Theatre and Design for Theatre Performance; Ecology and Conservation and even Equine Business Management. They go with our love and best wishes for the next stage of their lives, and we look forward to hearing all their news when they return in January for their first reunion at Certificates Evening.

Our I/GCSE results were also stunning (you can find out more [here](#)) and I congratulate last year's Year 11 students on their hard work and perseverance through the toughest of times. It was fantastic to see them arriving as Year 12s at their Induction Afternoon today, preparing for the next step in their lives as Sixth Formers in the new surroundings of the Sixth Form Centre. They have much to look forward to and we will enjoy watching them flourish as leaders of the school over the coming two years.

At the other end of the school we welcomed our extremely excited new Year 7s for their first day as Senior School students today. If the noise of busy feet streaming round the buildings during their school treasure hunt and the laughter coming from the games down on the MUGA this afternoon are anything to go by, they are already settling in for seven happy years at Channing. I am in the fortunate position of getting to teach the whole of the year group over the year through our Independent Investigation (I²) course: I cannot wait to get to know them all properly.

The exciting thing for all of us, freed as we are from the majority of Covid restrictions, is that at last our community can mix freely once again. Although our first day of term has been dominated by testing, we anticipate a year that will be far closer to normal than anything since February 2020 and, along with everyone else, I am looking forward to it very much indeed! In particular, I am pleased that I will finally be able to meet you all in person: in addition to the usual Welcome Evenings which we hold for Year 7, 10 and 12 at the start of each year, we have also added evenings for Years 8, 9, 11, 13 and the Junior School so that I will get to see everyone. Please do put these dates in your diary.

Year 13, Monday 13 September 6.00pm

Year 12, Monday 13 September 6.30pm

Year 11, Thursday 23 September (as part of the Sixth Form Open Evening)

Year 10, Monday 20 September, 5.00pm

Year 9, Thursday 7 October, 6.00pm

Year 8, Monday 11 October, 6.00pm

Year 7, Monday 20 September, 5.00pm

The new year always brings new faces into the staffroom as well as into the student body, and I am delighted to announce two new additions to the Senior Leadership Team of the school. Ms Rachell Fox joins us as Director of Communications, Marketing and Development from Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, while Mrs Gurvinder Bhamra-Burgess, who many of you will know as Head of Year 11 and Head of Economics, takes up a new role as Assistant Head Co-curricular in charge of the extracurricular life of the school.

Mrs Bhamra-Burgess's role as Head of Year 11 is being taken over by Ms Leisha Zanardo, who will carry her Year 10 group through to the end of their GCSEs. I am delighted to have appointed Ms Della-Porta as the new Head of Year 10. She will continue as Director of Sport and Mrs Bhamra-Burgess will continue as Head of Economics. Mrs Zuluaga de la Cruz and Mrs Shoham will become the co-tutors of what would have been 7SDP and is now 7DZ.

In the Admissions Office we welcome Mrs Rosie Gilleece, our new Registrar. She has a wealth of experience in school and university admissions and will be leading the admissions team.

A number of new teaching staff have joined us too. No doubt your children will be keen to know who the new initials on their timetables belong to! They are:

Ms Rehmat, who is working full-time from September as maternity cover Head of Psychology, while Mrs Walsh goes part-time for the first half of term until her maternity leave starts.

In the Chemistry department Miss Quow succeeds Ms Marmar as a full-time Chemistry teacher and takes on the new role of Year 7 & 8 Science Coordinator.

Additional teaching requirements mean three departments are expanding and we welcome Ms Gomez as a part-time teacher of French & Spanish, Mr Brand as a part-time teacher of Maths and Mr Smith as a part-time teacher of Economics.

We are also expanding our Learning Support department, with Ms Allkin joining Mrs Gardiner as a part-time specialist Learning Support teacher.

Ms Rozières, teacher of French and Spanish, returns from her maternity leave, and Mlle Emma Gachet joins us later this month as our new French language assistant.

We have a temporary addition to our History & Politics department, Ms McCahill, while Mr Martini-Phillips is on paternity leave for four weeks. Congratulations to him and his wife on the safe arrival of their son, right at the end of the summer holidays. You may remember that last year he took on the new role of Assistant Head of Sixth Form, for which he is relinquishing his post as Head of History, and Miss Lindsay now takes over from him in this role.

There have also been some new appointments in the Science department: Dr Spinks is our new Head of Science, while Ms Cooper becomes the STEM Coordinator. Mrs Selina joins us as the Biology lab technician following Mrs Gunasekera's retirement in July.

Three new faces join the Music department's team of visiting music staff. Paula Clifton-Everest will be teaching violin, Sue Blair the harp and Rebecca Wood oboe.

Miss Hamalis will be including details of our new Junior School staff in her first briefing of term today. I know that you and our students will make all our new members of staff feel welcome as they start their Channing careers. I am delighted with the calibre of staff we have been able to recruit and look forward to the energy and ideas that they will bring to the school.

One final change - and a lovely surprise - is that Miss Zekan, Head of Year 8 and PE teacher, is now Mrs Houston! We congratulate her and her husband Matt on their secret ceremony and wish them a long and happy life together.

An important point of discussion among the Senior Leadership Team during the course of last term was to review the changes we had made to the daily running and organisation of the school during the course of the pandemic and consider what we wanted to keep from this time. The most important thing for you to know is that our Parents' Evenings appointments will remain online this academic year. Feedback from parents and staff was that this was significantly more convenient, ensured every appointment ran to time and we also welcomed the opportunity to include the pupils in the conversations about their progress. Further details of Parents' Evenings dates can be found in the school calendar on the website and you will get more information before the one for your year group(s).

A further significant change to operations in school is that from today parents can email key members of staff direct, rather than via the wonderful Ms Ingram in the School Office. Please see a new [Who should I contact pdf.pdf](#) document, a copy of which will also be available on the Parent Portal for easy reference. We know that quick and easy communication is key to giving your child the best possible support in school so please read it carefully. I hope you will find this a useful development.

As I said at the start, today's Word from the Head is necessarily full of information to get the new year underway. On Friday I will write again with a more traditional Word from the Head, telling you more about our themes for the year and sharing news of the first whole school assembly in 18 months - and my first as Headmistress - which will take place on Thursday

morning. I've waited for this moment for more than two years since my appointment in June 2019 and am sure that it will be an enjoyable and meaningful event for everyone involved.

Let me finish today by saying Rosh Hashanah to our Jewish families. May this New Year be filled with health and happiness for you all. L'shanah Tovah!

With best wishes to you all for the year ahead,

Lindsey Hughes
Headmistress