



Dear Parents

Welcome to the new academic year at Channing! I hope you had great breaks over the summer and that you (and your children!) are returning to school rested and ready to enjoy the year ahead. It has been lovely to see many of you already at the Welcome Evenings for Years 7 and 10, which took place this week, and I am looking forward to seeing Years 11 and 12 next week and 8 and 9 the week after. Year 13 parents, I am sorry it won't be until October that I see you at Parents' Evening - but please rest assured that last definitely doesn't mean least! It's really important to us to invite you all into school as often as we can: there will be at least two events this year which are for each year group's parents to attend, in addition to the usual slew of music, drama, art and sporting activities which you are always welcome to come and see.

I think this is one of the reasons I love the start of term so much - the sense of excitement and possibility, looking forward to all the things which a new year will bring, always energises me. As you know I am a relentless optimist by nature, but I am well aware that the new year does not immediately fill everyone with quite the same joy! The Senior School Head Girls, Flora and Imani, talked about just this trepidation, or fear of change, at our first whole school assembly on Wednesday morning, and I've been alluding to the 'identity crisis' of transition at the Welcome Evenings too. More of this later in today's bumper start-of-term edition of Word from the Head.

Let me start by introducing - and in some cases, welcoming back - our new staff. In the Junior School two new staff join the Senior Team, Mrs Brant as Head of Early Years and Key Stage 1 and Miss Kitsis as Head of Key Stage 2. Miss Wright takes up a new role as Assistant Head Co-Curricular for the Junior School, and I am delighted to say that I have invited Mr Entwisle, Junior School Deputy Head, to join the Senior Leadership Team of the school from this year.

Also in the Junior School, Miss Bolton takes over as Head of Sport and is joined by Mrs Castle as our new PE teacher. Mrs Lynch is our new Drama specialist and we have two temporary staff, Ms Pala and Ms Bouterakos, working with us as Teaching Assistant and cover teacher respectively, until the return of Ms Clancy from her maternity leave.

In the Senior School we are excited to welcome four new Heads of Department. Mr Daw comes to us as Head of Physics and Mr Starr joins as our new Head of Psychology. Ms Wilberforce is our new Head of Careers and is also covering Higher Education and UCAS advice while Ms Kung is on her two-term sabbatical. Mrs Hiller is taking on the role of Partnerships Coordinator at the same time, to cover this aspect of Ms Kung's remit.

It's all change in the PE department, where Miss Weston (a GB triathlete, no less, and former Director of Sport at King Alfred's) takes over from Miss Della-Porta as Director of Sport. She is joined by Ms Nelson as Teacher in charge of Netball, and from January Mr Garnett will be our new Teacher in charge of Football. In the meantime, Mr Oh joins us for one term. Miss Allen, our new

PE Administrator, is also a high level footballer, and your children will undoubtedly meet her too at their clubs and activities.

Also new to the Senior School staff room are Ms Goodall in Art, Ms Kennedy in Classics, Ms Sequeria in Computer Science and Mr Fallon in Music. In addition Ms Pond (viola) and Ms Bircher (flute) are new Visiting Music Staff in the Music department. Miss Hadley has joined us in the Maths department, and we are looking forward to Mr Thomas working in the same department after his slightly delayed arrival.

Elsewhere around school, your children will probably already have met Chef Matta, our new Executive Chef, at lunchtime. Those taking LAMDA lessons will get to know Mrs Gordon, who is covering Ms Leighton's maternity leave, and some older pupils may recognise her as Miss Owens from when she worked at Channing a few years ago. Mrs Bell is our new HE & Partnerships Coordinator, Mr Ruiz is working with us for half a term as a science technician and Ms Ruiz is acting Assistant Registrar after Mrs Hilton left us over the summer.

We are very pleased to welcome back from maternity leave Mrs Blake, Head of Geography, Ms Cooper in Maths and Ms Quow in Chemistry. Ms Cooper steps back into her roles as Second in Maths and STEM Coordinator, while Ms Quow will resume as Years 7 & 8 Science Coordinator. Ms Sequeira, our new Computer Science teacher, is taking over the running of TeenTech in Year 9 from Ms Cooper. Mrs Keeling, our Compliance Manager, is also back, as are three Visiting Music Staff: Miss Calderbank, Mrs Dodds and Mrs Knight.

That list may give you an idea of the scale of life at Channing. As Miss Hamalis pointed out in her part of assembly yesterday, we have started the year with 1036 girls in 14 year groups, 167 teachers and 91 non-teaching support staff, which includes Teaching Assistants, catering staff, office staff, caretakers, cleaners (and Governors!). That's quite a lot of people! Miss Hamalis asked this term's Junior School Head Girls, Helena and Ruby, to help her make a recipe for success for the year ahead. Inspired by the Great British Bake Off and Junior Bake Off, they poured jelly babies to represent all of the people in the Channing community into a huge mixing bowl and stirred in confetti for all the ingredients needed for a successful year. The girls offered some great suggestions: kindness, hard work, bravery, empathy, perseverance and laughter to name but a few. I really like the idea that together we can all work together to make this year an absolute showstopper!

Of course one of the key outcomes for our community are the public examination results and I am pleased to share with you this year's A level and GCSE results. As you know from the extensive media coverage in August, public exam grades have returned to pre-pandemic standards this year with grading equivalent to that in 2019 when exams last took place. Therefore we anticipated that Channing's grades this year would be significantly lower than in the last three years, and at A level potentially lower than in 2019.

This has indeed proved to be the case, and while there are some outstanding individual A level successes the overall headline figures are lower than in 2019 with 21.9% of grades awarded A\* (28.3% in 2019). 52.5% of all grades were at A\*-A (2019 71.1%) and A\*-B grades are 83.1% (2019 91.4%). Nonetheless we are very proud of our girls and their hard work. Highlights include 4 of the 52-strong cohort achieving 3 or more A\* grades, two of whom achieved 4 A\*s. The five girls in the group who have been with us since the Junior School achieved 100% A\*-B

with 4 A\*s, 8 As and 4Bs, while those girls on our SEND register achieved extraordinary outcomes with 30.8% of their grades at A\*. Our first ever class of Computer Science students - 2 girls - both achieved A grades, and there were particularly commendable performances from the Art, English, Classics, Economics and Politics departments.

While our A level results were not in the same league as those of some of our competitors this year, I would point to the fact that we take a very different approach to life in the Sixth Form. Unlike our competitor schools, we do not require students to leave if they have disappointing GCSE results or, as some schools do, poor exam grades in the summer of Year 12. Rather we are a school which supports every student to achieve their best through whatever personal or academic challenges they may be facing. Sadly there were a lot of those for this particular year group and we are pleased for every single girl, knowing what their grades mean to them and the challenges they had to overcome to achieve them. In the light of personal success, average outcomes should always come second.

Most importantly, though, I am happy to say that the vast majority of these students will be heading to their chosen universities next year. More than 90% of the year group are heading to their chosen university or further education destination. This includes our medic, who has achieved her place at Bristol, and a place at Magdalene College, Cambridge, to read Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion. Two girls are taking Art Foundation courses. This set of university outcomes is particularly pleasing given the increased competition for university places in the context of a higher number of 18 year olds and the growing attraction of international students to UK universities. In addition five students are heading to North America, two to Canada and three to the USA.

This year's GCSE results are extremely pleasing as they are broadly in line with the results gained by the Channing cohort of 2019 and include some excellent individual and departmental achievements. Our headline figures are strong with the total percentage of results at grade 9 standing at 34.9%, (2019 35.7%). Likewise 63.7% of all grades were achieved at 8 & 9 (2019 64.6%). The total percentage of 7-9 grades is 86.1% which sits just above the 2019 total of 85.3%. 93 of the 95 girls in the year group achieved at least one 8 or 9 grade, which is a wonderful statistic. We are especially thrilled for the 14 girls who achieved 10 grades 8 & 9, which is 15% of the cohort. Of these one girl achieved 10 straight grade 9s.

Particular congratulations go to Mr Haworth, Head of Art, and his team for the excellent results in Art where all 34 of the pupils achieved a Grade 9, which is an extraordinary achievement. Classical Greek, Drama, Geography and Latin achieved 100% Grades 9-7. In addition over 85% of all results were graded at 9-7 in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, German, History, Mathematics and Spanish.

There are a number of new innovations in school this year, which I am sharing in more detail at the Welcome Evenings. Firstly, it's worth highlighting our new rewards and sanctions policy, which comes into effect alongside our four classroom behaviour non-negotiables (you can see more about this from Mr Boardman in the Teaching & Learning section below). We know that being clear and consistent about expected behaviour is helpful for young people as they work out who they are and find their way in the world. Our new rewards and sanctions policy is designed to do just that: encouraging good behaviour and nipping issues in the bud before they become bad habits. The policy works on a sliding scale of merits and demerits, commendations

and reprimands, and I know that I can count on your full support in upholding the policy which is underpinned by the Channing ethos of respect, kindness and inclusivity. You'll be able to see their merits, demerits and so on via the Parent Portal.

Indeed we have been working hard to develop the Parent Portal as a proper one-stop-shop for all the information you need to access as parents. Any letters which are sent to you during the week are also archived here for ease of reference. In our increasingly digital world it's very rare for anything to come home on paper now so please check junk or spam inboxes and ensure all the Channing email addresses are set as safe senders. In addition it's worth knowing that we have firm boundaries on email traffic in school: staff should only respond to you during normal working hours. Please rest assured that even if you don't get an instant response to your message, the person you have contacted will be working on your question or concern. We do all teach (even me!) so it may take some time. We always recommend starting with the form tutor with any questions you might have, but if you're not sure who the best person is we also have our trusty Who Should I Contact? document which is attached below and available on the Parent Portal for easy reference.

Finally, as you know we have always required our girls' mobile phones to be invisible and inaudible during the day and to help them with that, as I mentioned at the end of last term, this year we are introducing Yondr. Pupils in Years 7-10 will be issued with a special pouch next week in which their phones will be sealed at the start of the day and will only be able to be accessed before they leave at the end of the school day. We are well aware that there has been much discussion among the girls about how to get around this - but please be reassured we have taken plenty of advice from schools who have already introduced [Yondr](#) and are prepared for the dodges! And please also be reassured that if you need to contact your child urgently, you can do so via the School Office phone number and likewise, they - or we - will call you if there is a problem at our end.

Of course, we really hope there won't be problems. However, going back to where I began, we also know that the start of the year can be very difficult when we all love stability. Some of your children might be thrilled about having a fresh start. Many of them, though, might be feeling a little bit anxious about what's to come. Perhaps they've just started a new section of their school career - gone up a key stage, or crossed over from Fairseat, started Sixth Form, or perhaps this is their very first week at Channing. As I mentioned earlier, I heard Dr Kathy Weston of TooledUp recently refer to transitions as identity crises. It's absolutely true, for our children as much as for us, and it can be hard to navigate the range of feelings the start of term inspires.

Flora and Imani were brilliant on just this topic on Wednesday morning. They talked about being nervous about beginning Year 13, in many ways a daunting year. They also touched on the big transition ahead of them – finishing school. Interestingly, they found that none of this is as scary for them as it used to be a few years ago. As they put it, *“Some people naturally embrace and thrive on the unexpected and unfamiliar, but for those of us to whom this doesn't come so easily, it might help to think of change as a skill. Like badminton, baking, any other skill, it takes practice. Starting a new year at school, no matter how anxious it might make you, is great practice at the art of change.”* I think that's marvellous advice.

They also reinforced that, time and time again, natural changes bring about huge positive growth. As Flora said, *“This sense of beginning and difference in September is a feeling I am sure every person in this room is familiar with - it’s nerve wracking and it’s exciting - as we take on new subjects, new friendships, new students or clubs or sports. There is this whole stretch of Familiar Unknown ahead of us. And we don’t quite know where it’s heading but perhaps we know where we want it to go. We want it to be a successful year, a happy year, one that treats us and our loved ones well. Some of this is in our control - some of this is not. But here in this hall we have so much opportunity within arm’s reach - we just need to have the guts to take it.”*

Imani referred to one of her heroes, David Bowie, as someone who perfectly encapsulates the idea of embracing change. She exhorted us to listen to his song [Changes](#) whenever anxiety about change comes creeping back. Bowie reminds us to ‘Turn and face the strange’, and what better attitude is there to the chaotic, possibly stressful and unexpected changes that life throws at us? Flora ended by saying, *“Fear of change is natural for us as human beings, but so is adaptation. You can’t expect yourself to be completely relaxed and unbothered by the start of a new school year. But we hope you can mix in a little bit of excitement too.”*

I have no doubt that there will be a lot of excitement amongst the highs and lows of the year to come. I used Wednesday morning as a chance to consider what we learned from the highs and lows of the England women’s football team progress through the World Cup and my own attempts to learn to play golf this summer (spoiler alert, it does involve being 10% braver) - but I think I’ll save that for another time! For now, I wish you all a most enjoyable weekend, which I hope will be a chance to recoup and relax after the rigours of the first week back.

With warmest wishes (and yes, that is a deliberate comment on the weather!),

Mrs Lindsey Hughes  
Headmistress

## Notices

### Who Should I Contact?

For the most up to date version of the school's contact sheet please click [here](#). A copy of this will also be made available on the Parent Portal.

### Accessing the School Calendar

All events for the year are in the School Calendar which is available on the Parent Portal. The 'School Calendar Parent View' button shows the complete calendar, which can be viewed by each month, week or day. Events also appear on the right-hand side of the home page under 'Forthcoming Events' and the monthly view of the calendar also appears at the bottom of the home page. Additional information about an event appears when you click on the event.

### Cashless Vending Machines

As part of the school's move away from using cash on site, we will be installing two brand new vending machines in the Senior School. One of these will be for hot drinks, which will be accessible in the playground, and a second machine will be installed in the Sixth Form Centre for the exclusive use of the Sixth Form.

The machines will be in use from Wednesday 13 September and we will inform pupils when they are ready to use. Pupils will be able to use their debit cards or precharged cards to use the machines. Please reinforce to your child that there will no longer be an option to use cash.

Judith Hibbert  
Catering Manager



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# Girls Enjoying Success

## Science News

### Anatomy Club (Y7 & Y8)

The Anatomy Club, for Year 7 and 8 students, is starting on Tuesday 19 September and will run for 6 sessions this term. The club involves the dissection of a range of organisms. This year we will have a **new** program of dissections, including the examination of a mouse, lizard, starfish and a

small mammal brain! After each dissection, the students will carefully prepare tissue sections to view under a microscope during the session.

If you would like your child to take part in the anatomy club this term, please complete the Google Form using this [link](#). This will also be posted in the students' Science Google Classrooms. The club is limited to a maximum number of 16 students and pupils will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Please only apply if you believe that your child can attend all of the sessions. The club will run again next term so students should be able to join then if they are unable to take part this term.



### STEM Careers Club (Y10 & Y11)

STEM careers club is a new club open to Year 10 and 11 students on Tuesday lunchtime in LG3 at 12:15pm starting from 19 September. The first sessions will be for those thinking about a career in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and nursing. If students are interested in any of those careers, or any career medically related, you are warmly invited to attend. Students need to be prepared to discuss and participate in a range of activities in each session. Related to both a career in Medicine and to support the school's Monday morning reading initiative, a recommended book is *'When breath becomes air'* by Paul Kalanithi.



### Science Journal Club (Y10-13)

Science Journal Club will resume on Thursday lunchtimes at 12:25pm in LG2 starting from Thursday 14 September. Each week we will discuss a short article chosen from a recent issue of New Scientist. Students will be given online access to the magazine and the articles are all relatively short - normally only one or two sides of A4. In previous years we have chosen articles on a wide range of topics including the use of sustainable materials, recycling, engineering, chemistry, nutrition, astronomy and biological sciences. Students can help to choose the articles that we read and so a broad range of interests can be explored. Students can also opt into reading books from the Guardian's list of "[Best science books of 2022](#)". We will aim to read one book each half term for those

students who wish to explore subjects in greater depth than the shorter, weekly articles. We will begin with 'How to prevent the next pandemic' by Bill Gates.

### Marine Biology Club

An exciting opportunity for Year 10 students who are either considering a career in veterinary science, marine biology or the biological sciences, or who are interested in finding out more about these fields. Mrs Hillier and Mr Grossman will be running a marine biology club in school on Mondays at 12:25pm. Your child will learn about how to care for tropical fish, the set up and maintenance of tropical fish tanks, how vets perform surgery on fish, and what it takes to have a career in marine biology, as well as related topics such as budgeting, planning, and the biology of aquariums. This will be a practical opportunity, with students taking responsibility for setting up a 30L fish tank, choosing the fish to introduce, and then feeding and caring for the fish throughout the year. We will also have visiting speakers and possible opportunities to visit sites of interest,



depending on demand. If your child is interested in being a part of Year 10 Marine Biology Club, please ask them to email or see Mrs Hillier or Mr Grossman. Marine Biology Club will meet for the first time on Monday 18 September, and membership will be on a first-come-first-served basis as there are limited spaces.

## English News

8MH started their unit on Gothic stories by devising their own Gothic plots, which they will then present in storyboard form. The class is looking forward to showcasing their work next week when we will be transforming the classroom into a gallery of horror and gore!



## T&L News: Using research-based evidence to help you support your child

### Classroom Learning Behaviours & our 4 'non-negotiables'

At Channing we treat everyone with respect and kindness and this means that everyone has the right to learn. There is a wealth of research that suggests that:

- consistent routines in classrooms makes managing behaviour easier for everyone
- good behaviour promotes and supports consistently excellent teaching and learning

To maximise the opportunities for your child to learn we have introduced the following non-negotiable rules as a minimum expectation in our classrooms. Your child has been introduced to them this week. If every child follows these rules it maximises the opportunity for everyone to learn.

1. Arrive to lessons on time ('late' means after the lesson has started)
2. We expect students to be ready to learn
3. During the lesson we insist on the following learning behaviours as a minimum:
  - a. No calling out unless invited
  - b. No leaving lessons to get equipment or fill up water bottles
4. At the end of lessons: It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the classroom is left in a reasonable state: chairs are in, the tables are straight, the whiteboard clean and any rubbish is in the bin.

Failure to adhere to these expectations will be challenged and dealt with consistently and fairly.

[This student Spotlight](#) gives more details about these 'non-negotiables' and why they support effective learning.



## Alumnae News

The start of the new academic year is always filled with excitement: of things to come and fond memories of things that have passed. As such we would like to share this great picture of the Lower Sixth in the academic year of 1996-97: when Brunner House was only one story high, “The Macarena” took dance floors by storm and Central Perk became the place to make *Friends*.



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