



WETHERBY

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Head: Mr N R Baker

15 December 2021

Dear Parents,

Just as Omicron threatens to rip through London and the country as a whole, we have just about managed to scramble to the end of term. We finish the term with one member of staff and two positive cases amongst the pupil body with the maximum at any time over the course of the term standing at four (at five, you have to report to PHE). Whilst these numbers are low compared to colleagues in other London schools, it does feel as if we are on the edge of a cliff with regards to cases and the end of term today feels timely. Having completed the term, we can be immensely proud of our collective efforts with regard to making the term as 'normal' as possible. The atmosphere in the building and in the classrooms has been tangibly different now we are out of bubbles; boys travelling freely across both sides of the building, playing fixtures, participating in a full clubs programme, Friday Assembly, music concerts, drama productions and so on. It's been a thoroughly enjoyable term and I am delighted with the attitude, enthusiasm and cheery nature of the boys – well done, fellas!

And of course, none of this happens without Team Wetherby. I said yesterday at my Alpha Plus Educational Strategy presentation that the Wetherby Prep Common Room has never been stronger. We have had many brilliant staff over the years but I can confidently say that this group is the best we have ever had. Their commitment, professionalism and can-do attitude makes me extremely proud and forever grateful – I salute them all. In particular though, I must pay tribute to our staff that are leaving us today. Deputy Head, **Mrs Alice Furnell**, leaves us on maternity leave and we look forward to welcoming her back in the Summer Term. **Miss Deborah Kroiter** joined us in 2012 and has been a legendary English and Maths teacher and latterly Head of Years 5 and 6. 'Debs' has been a special colleague over the last 10 years and very much part of everything we do well here; we wish her all the best as she relocates to Kent with her fiancé. **Mrs Katie Callaghan** has taught Drama and English at the school for the last three years and done a superb job, using her senior school experience to really push the boys on academically. We wish her well as she concentrates on bringing up her young family in Buckinghamshire. **Miss Danielle Ogden** has worked on Reception for the past five years and been at the end of thousands of phone calls and email enquiries. Always with a professional, efficient, and caring attitude, Danielle has been a magnificent colleague, great fun and always calm in a crisis.

To lose one Ogden is careless, but to lose two is positively reckless. I must though ruin everyone's Christmas by announcing that Premises Manager and my right-hand man, **Mr Hal Ogden**, will be taking his well-deserved retirement at the end of this academic year. Since 2009, Hal has been much more than a Premises Manager, he is involved in every aspect of Wetherby Prep and though we can always cover a member of staff at the school, if Hal is away for any reason, the school just doesn't operate as well. We will, of course, have plenty of time to celebrate Hal's time and contribution to Wetherby Prep in the coming terms.

We welcome two new colleagues next term. **Miss Molly Heery** joins us to teach Maths throughout the School. Molly is a superb teacher and highly-regarded classroom practitioner who joins us from Sinclair House School – to get such a talented Maths teacher mid-year was really some coup. We also welcome (back) **Mrs Rachel Couffignals** who returns to the school having taken a break for the past four years to bring up her young children. Great to have Rachel back and I know Molly will be a hit with the boys and a great asset to our Common Room. As an internal appointment, Mr Greg Trencher takes over from Miss Kroiter as Head of Years 5 and 6 (though will continue for the remainder of the year as 8T Form Teacher).

Lastly, a bit of housekeeping. Thank you to all those parents who have contributed to the [questionnaire](#). Please do click and contribute – over 50 parents have done so far but the larger the sample size the more reflective the opinion so please do have your say.

Enjoy the holidays and your children and thank you for your wholehearted support of me and our school this term and throughout an unforgettable 2021. Unquestionably, we could not have done it without you!

Look forward to seeing everyone back on **Wednesday 5 January**.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Baker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Baker