

TOWNSEND PARENTMAIL NEWSLETTER
Friday 29th November 2019

WORSHIP AT TOWNSEND

The Value for this half term is WISDOM: 'Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.' Proverbs 4:6-7 The values will be shared in daily worship sessions and students will have the opportunity to reflect on their meanings with a particular reference to how we lead our everyday lives.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

2nd December – Trial exams continue
5th December - Year 11 & 12 Maths Inspirations trip
11th December – Christmas Concert
13th December – Save the Children Jumper Day
16th December – Senior Prize Giving 7pm
18th December – Christingle Cathedral Service 2pm
19th December – Term Ends 12.30pm

PARENT/CARER SUPPORT GROUP

The next Parent/Carer Coffee Morning will be on Tuesday 3rd December at 10am. As it is our last meeting before Christmas there will be mince pies and a 'cuppa' to get us into the festive spirit. It was lovely to see some Year 7 parent/carers at the last one. All our welcome and we look forward to seeing you.

CHRISTINGLE CATHEDRAL SERVICE

We would like to invite all parents to attend our special Christingle Cathedral Service on Wednesday 18th December from 2pm. Please be aware that space may be limited so you do need to arrive early if you want a seat! Wednesday is also market day in St Albans so traffic is likely to be particularly heavy on this occasion. Do allow enough time to pick up your child at 3pm from the Cathedral.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR 12 GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS

Year 12 have organised a reverse advent calendar for the first 12 school days of December. Form groups have been asked to donate one item per day and house points will be awarded. We will be supporting a local Food Bank and Open Door (a local homeless charity). Items such as clothing, toiletries, non-perishable food items can be donated. Students from each form group will bring their item to the sixth form block during afternoon registration each day. Students have been made aware during year group assemblies this week. Thank you for supporting such a great cause in the lead up to the Christmas holidays.

Miss Gibbons, Head of Sixth Form

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

Operation Encompass

The school are fully behind and supportive of a new Police initiative designed to support children facing domestic abuse. Please read the letter attached to the parentmail and read the description below:

***Operation Encompass** is a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support for children and young*

people experiencing domestic abuse. Information is shared by the police with a school's trained Key Adult (DSL) prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident thus enabling appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure; domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling immediate support, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow.

Operation Encompass believes that children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right and should be acknowledged as such.

For more information go to <https://www.operationencompass.org/>

ATTENDANCE

There remains a huge amount of evidence through all research that good attendance is linked to good attainment

..... missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances (Department of Education)

Children should be at school each day and attendance should be above 95%. Good attendance is about improving opportunities for emotional social and academic development. It is about building resilience and establishing routines that young people need later in life.

We do ask you as parents/carers to contact us with a reason for absence on the first day your child is away. Being absent from school and not having any reason for this absence can lead to safeguarding/child protection concerns so please do keep in contact with us to let us know what is happening. If your child is having problems with learning or with friends don't keep him/her from school. Ring up to speak to the form tutor and make an appointment to come in and talk to us.

Persistent Absence is deemed to be under 90%.The school works closely with the Local Authority Attendance Officer Rebecca Porzio and where there are ongoing concerns around attendance or late arrivals to school and the intervention and support of the form tutor and Head of Year has had no impact the school will consider warnings of penalty fines and then if necessary referring these for action through the Local Authority. It is not something we take lightly but it is a course of action we will take if absence persists.

Punctuality is part of good attendance and although we are aware many families travel some distance to come to school we do ask that you and your child allow enough travel time to get to school for an 8.45am start. Form tutors have been given more guidance, support and instructions to help address absence and lates more promptly with students and parents/carers. Please do work with them to ensure your child is attending regularly and arrives at school for an 8.45 start. Morning registration closes at 9.30 and if your child arrives at school after this time we will require a written reason for absence from you. Those children who use the two dedicated school buses will not be penalised with a 'late' (L) on the registration sheets, if the lateness is due entirely to the school bus arriving late

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Our Christmas lunch will be on Wednesday 11th December at a price of £3.50 (a vegetarian option is available.) The last day for ordering meals will be Thursday 5th December. Christmas lunches should be ordered at the tills. Children on FSM will receive a Christmas lunch automatically or vegetarian alternative if appropriate.

There will still be a Grab & Go food alternative available on the day for those students who do not want a Christmas lunch.

ST ALBANS SCHOOLS MUSIC CONCERT

Congratulations to all of the students who performed at the St Albans Secondary Schools Music Association concert at The Alban Arena on Monday. You were a credit to the school and both Townsend Band and Townsend Voices performed beautifully!
Miss Kirk, Head of Music

CHRISTMAS CONCERT - WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2019

All students who are performing in the Townsend Christmas Concert should have received a letter by now. Townsend Band, Townsend Voices and Drama Club are all performing, as well as a selection of musical solos and duets as well as some Year 7 ensembles. If your child is hoping to be in the concert but has not brought a letter home, they can collect one from the Music Block on Monday at break time.

The event is at 7pm and is free of charge to attend; the more the merrier. I look forward to seeing many of you in attendance to celebrate Christmas and the fantastic learning that has been happening in Music and Drama this term.

Miss Kirk, Head of Music.

DEBATING SOCIETY

Thank you to the parents/carers of pupils who took part in Tuesday's Rotary Club debate. It was great to see our well prepared and confident debaters competing against local schools. We are also pleased that one of our teams won 'runners up'.

Mrs Harris, Director of Learning for English

LOCAL COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

Our community litter pick has been going well - year 7 collected 2 bags of rubbish, and year 8 collected 3 bags of rubbish from the streets surrounding our school. Year 9 will be taking to the streets this week! Thank you and well done to those volunteers from each year group that have been taking part.

SCHOOL PRODUCTION

This year's school production will be 'Beauty and the Beast' and will take place on July 9th & 10th at 7pm in the Hall. Audition sign up will be on Monday 16th December at 1:25-1:55pm lunch time in the Drama Studio, students can sign up for parts and will be added to the audition list. The auditions for the show are on Monday 13th January 2020 at 3:30-5:00pm in the Hall, audition packs will be given out on the sign up day for students to practise over Christmas. Auditions are open to students in years 7-10 & 12-13 and we hope there will be a big turn out like last year. The show is a wonderful opportunity for your child to be creative and show dedication to a production with roles including on stage, backstage and technical. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mrs Coates.

YEAR 7 & 8

Year 7 History

Students should be working on their half termly project for History on Medieval castles. An instructional booklet has been provided to support them in their project and teachers will check every week on their progress which can be accessed on Show My Homework. We would be grateful if you can check in with your child to see

how they are progressing with this project and encourage them to have it completed by the deadline date on Show My Homework.

Mrs Bailey, Head of History

Year 8 Geography

Students have been given their extended learning project for home learning this half term in Geography lessons. It is about Russia and the human and physical geography within. Students have been given an instruction sheet that also outlines the success criteria, it is on Show My Homework with deadline dates. We would be grateful if you can check in with your child to see how they are progressing with this project and encourage them to have it completed by the deadline date on Show My Homework.

Many thanks

The Geography Department

Year 7 and 8 Languages

REMINDER: Ciné-minis pour les jeunes: Key Stage 3 French Study Day at the British Film Institute is on Wednesday 5th February 2020.

Please encourage your child to return pink slips and pay for the trip by Monday 2nd December, so that we can finalise our booking with the BFI and the coach company. Any students in Years 7 or 8 who have not yet signed up but would like to attend, need to collect a letter from their French teacher.

The cost of the trip will be £20.00; this includes the cost of the coach and workshop. It is an excellent opportunity to experience an aspect of French culture and practise French listening and speaking skills particularly for those students considering taking French at GCSE. If you are experiencing any particular financial hardship but you would still like your child to attend this trip please do speak in confidence to your child's Director of Learning.

Assessments in French Autumn Term Part 2

For information, students will be completing the following assessments in their French lessons over the next few weeks:

YEAR GROUP	SKILL TO BE ASSESSED	ASSESSMENT TOPIC FOCUS
7	SPEAKING	Talking about yourself, family and friends
8	READING	Holidays and use of the past tense.
9	SPEAKING	Identity and culture – family relationships, friends, childhood and role models.
10	READING AND LISTENING	Local area holiday and travel – describing where you live, giving opinions, future plans and the weather.
11	SPEAKING LISTENING READING WRITING (MOCK GCSE EXAM)	Full GCSE exam Foundation/ Higher.

YEAR 9, 10 & 11

Year 10 History

Students are currently studying the American West and they can procure the revision guide at the cost of £4 from the History office at any point in the year. If your family has financial difficulties, the school may be able to assist in very special

cases. Please speak to your child's Head of Year in the first instance to discuss the problem in confidence.

NEW VIEWS

Students have had their first writer workshop visit which went really well, they should now use the Christmas Holidays to write their first drafts. Submission date for first drafts is Wednesday 26th February 2020. For all other dates see the original letter with date timeline and if another letter is required, your child can obtain them from Mrs Coates, Head of Drama.

SIXTH FORM

UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS - UCAS STATEMENT WRITING

Miss Gibbons will be holding a UCAS statement writing workshop/ support session for Year 13s who still need to complete their personal statement on Wednesday 4th December. They will take place lessons 4 & 5 and students should come to the Sixth Form block.

Miss Gibbons, Head of Sixth Form

STUDENT WELLBEING

KOOTH AND HEALTHY YOUNG MINDS

Both websites come recommended for young people. We do urge you as parents/carers and your child to have a look at the many resources and information provided on both sites. They offer practical support and help around a wealth of issues and concerns a young person may have or develop. They also provide advice and support for parents/carers!

<https://www.kooth.com/>

<https://www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/>

HEALTH AND DIET DURING EXAMINATION SEASON

What to Eat before an Exam?

Did you know that what your child eats and drinks can affect their exam performance? The following nutrition tips will help your child perform at their best during their mock exams.

1. Make sure to eat. Even if your child normally skips breakfast or avoids eating when they are nervous, they should still make the time to eat something. Very simply, the brain needs the energy from food to work efficiently. and to remain focused on the exam. If your child really cannot stomach food, then try a protein shake or smoothie.

2. Encourage healthy food. This includes protein-rich foods which can lead to greater mental alertness. Healthy food choices on exam days could include eggs, nuts, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Good breakfast combinations might be whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk, eggs and toast with jam, porridge, oatmeal, or sugar-free muesli and bananas. Other dietary choices considered to be healthy foods are fish, walnuts, blueberries, sunflower seeds, flaxseed, dried fruits, figs, and prunes.

3. Avoid unhelpful foods. On exam days, stay away from foods made of white flour, such as biscuits, cakes, and muffins, which require added time and energy to digest. Also avoid foods that are high in refined sugar, such as chocolates, desserts, and sweets These can send your child on sugar highs and lows.

4. Drink healthy beverages. Make sure your child drinks enough water before and

during their exam. Tea also works, though without a lot of sugar. Dehydration can make your child lose concentration, feel faint, and sapped of energy.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Please note that although we are very happy to pass on information these are not Townsend sponsored or organised events.

Following a Hertfordshire led Mental Health Training course, an 'app' called The **Stay Alive app** has been recommended to young people. As a parent/carer it is your decision whether you inform your child about it or promote its use. We are simply alerting you to its existence. The following information describes the app. <https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/>

*The Stay Alive app is a **suicide prevention resource** for the **UK**, packed full of **useful information** and **tools** to help you **stay safe** in crisis. You can use it **if you are having thoughts of suicide** or **if you are concerned about someone else** who may be considering suicide.*

*In addition to the **resources**, the app includes a **safety plan**, customisable **reasons for living**, and a **LifeBox**. Here you can store photos and memories that are important to you.*

*You can also read the **strategies for staying safe** or explore the tips on how to **stay grounded** when you're feeling overwhelmed. Try the **guided-breathing exercises**, and support your wellness by creating your own interactive **Wellness Plan**.*

*The app **links** you directly to **local** and **national crisis resources**, so you won't need to carry around slips of paper with contact details on – it's **all stored there within the app**. If the resource isn't listed, simply **add in your own**.*