



28<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re: 'The importance of reflection'**

With the clocks going forward last weekend, the evenings certainly are starting to feel longer.

This half term has been a busy few weeks as the school has been engaged in recruiting some excellent teachers and support staff for the coming academic year. These roles will enable us to continue to grow sustainably over the coming years as more students fill the lower year groups as well as providing for an ever increasing number in the Sixth Form. We have had over 420 applications for places in Year 12 for next year and over 600 for Year 7. Clearly, not all these will materialize into offers of a place but it does present opportunities for growth and development that we have been planning for some time.

We formally opened The Peter Burns Performing Arts Centre this month with invited dignitaries in attendance. It is great to be able to see students using the building and is such a joy to be able to give them something they deserve. Year 11 and 13 students have been using the building to sit the last set of mock exams prior to their external examinations in a few short weeks. They are busy making final preparations and will no doubt be engaged in revision schedules over the Easter break at home and will be having some very honest, reflective conversations with themselves about what they need to do to attain the very best futures for themselves. It is important that they take breaks as well during this period so that they don't burn themselves out with their revision.

The months of March and April are not only a time for chocolate, bunnies and daffodils but is also a time for quiet personal reflection about the past whilst looking with hope to the future. Some students are currently observing Ramadan which gives them time during the day to observe self-discipline and reminds them of the suffering of the poor. During Ramadan, it is common to have one meal (known as the suhoor), just before dawn and another (known as the iftar), directly after sunset. Students who are not Muslim have been invited to join in the iftar on Friday this week. For Christians, this time of lent is a period of 40 days during which they remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ. The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. This is because of the time of year when it happens, as this is when the days start to get longer, as we approach Summer. It is a time of reflection and of asking for forgiveness, and when Christians prepare to celebrate Jesus's resurrection at the feast of Easter, which comes at the very end of Lent. It is important that a school that is as diverse as ours enables students from all backgrounds to express themselves, explore differences and celebrate what makes each of us special. The various trips students go on support what is being taught and explored in lessons.

I hope that the Easter holiday gives you time with loved ones and the space to relax, unwind and recharge. I certainly encourage the school staff and students to do that so that perspective can be regained, balance in our day-to-day lives restored and energy levels recharged for the coming term.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Bishop (Headteacher)