

## End of Half Term Update from the Principal

Including guidance on parent contributions for trips

Dear Parents,

At the end of the first half term of the academic year, I wanted to write to all the parents in the school to touch base with you all, and provide you some important updates. The main way that we now communicate with parents is through the weekly newsletter. This is available on the website and by email: <http://kingsolomonacademy.org/school-culture/relationships-parents/letters-home>

Through the newsletters we are sharing a lot of important information. I wanted to write to you in addition to provide an update and also to take the opportunity to outline our approach to school trips this year.

### A successful start to the year

At the start of this year we were extremely proud to celebrate the 10 Year anniversary of the school's founding. We recognised the contribution of our pupils, parents and governors and also celebrated the successful destinations of the departing class of 2017.



*Parents, governors, staff and pupils enjoyed celebrating 10 Years of KSA.*



*Karen Buck MP congratulates the highest performing graduating alumni.*

## GCSE results published

In the last few days the initial national league table were published for 2017. Our results placed us in the top 1% of schools for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running and the highest performing school in Westminster. The results can be viewed <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/find-a-school-in-england>

## Upcoming training day and dates for parent calendars

A reminder that Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October is a Staff Training Day. No pupils will come to school on that day. We also have a training day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December. The next half term ends on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December** and we expect 100% attendance up to and including that date. Pupils return to school on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January**.

In the next few weeks we will be hosting Parent Home Learning Workshops in Primary. We invite all parents to attend these important events. We will review how the workshops go, but hope to make these a regular opportunity for parents and pupils to spend time together talking about learning.

Date and Time	
Year 6	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Year 5	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Year 4	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Year 3	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Year 2	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Year 1	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Reception	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> November at 3pm
Nursery	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> November at <b>2pm</b>

## Staffing Updates

In the last few weeks, three of our Senior Leaders have given birth to baby girls. Ms Woolf, Ms Armitage and Ms Humphreys have all appreciated the congratulations good wishes that have been sent from the school. We look forward to welcoming them to visit with their daughters soon.

We have welcomed a number of new staff to the school, and they have settled in quickly to their roles. It has been great to see the relationships building between these new staff and parents. Thank you to all the parents for making all the new staff feel welcome. I am very pleased and proud of the staff body we have.

There are two changes to staffing to let you know about. Firstly, Mrs Keating, who joined us in September will be moving on from KSA. Ms England, Assistant Principal, will be leading Infants from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October. Ms England has already been spending a lot of time in Infants this year already and looks forward to working together with Infant parents from now on.

The second change is that Mr Dolan is moving to the USA after 7 years at KSA. Mr Dolan's contribution to the school has been significant, leading many pupils to huge success in their maths learning, and being part of the building of the school. I am very grateful to him for everything he has contributed. We wish him the very best in his new life in America.

## Trip Contributions

I wrote to all parents back in July to let them know that we would be changing the way that we ask for parental contributions to school trips. We have considered this area carefully, and consulted with staff and the Parent Council as to how we can give our pupils the best possible experiences, whilst also ensuring the the school can run sustainably. We understand that for some families meeting these costs is difficult, hence why we wrote to all parents before the summer. I am writing now to give guidance on how and when these contributions should be paid. I have received positive feedback from parents that this change will be one for the better.

## Trips costs

We cannot afford to run the trips we do without parental support, and in the past we have spent a lot of staff time (which costs money) dealing with contacting individual payments for individual trips. We have been told by parents that it has been difficult to know how much to save up to contribute to trips, and also been in the position where there has been confusion about trip costs. We believe we can make the situation better by streamlining and making consistent the costs of the trips.

In the past, in our younger years, day trips are charged on a trip by trip basis. This created a lot of admin work to communicate, chase and monitor payments. It is complicated for parents, who did not know at the start of the year how much the annual cost will be. It is therefore suggested that there is an annual budget for day trips of £50, similar to what has already been paid, and that a proportion of this is passed on to parents on a means tested basis.

In Years 4-12<sup>1</sup> we will also run residential trips – we believe these are an important part of our school. We want to provide clarity in advance of how much these will cost, as we have received feedback that this would help families to plan their budgets.

The government gives us extra money to pay for some costs for families on free school meals, and so we use some of this money to reduce the amount we ask these families to contribute.

We care about trips so much that **we will use the school budget to subsidise trips across all year groups**. For Free School meals children the school will pay for 60% of the trips costs. For other pupils, the school will pay for 30% of the costs.

The remaining contributions we are therefore asking from parents are:

	Day trips	Residential trips	Total to be paid per year
Years R-3	£20		£20
Year 4	£20	£24	£44
Year 5	£20	£48	£68
Year 6		£80	£80
Year 7-10		£80	£80
Year 11		£60	£60
Year 12		£80	£80

<sup>1</sup> There is no whole year group residential in Year 13.

## Families not eligible for Free School Meals

	Day trips	Residential trips	Total to be paid per year
Years R-3	£35		£35
Year 4	£35	£42	£77
Year 5	£35	£84	£119
Year 6		£140	£140
Year 7-10		£140	£140
Year 11		£105	£105
Year 12		£140	£140

To save on time writing and phoning parents about contributions, and to ensure that we know that we have received this money early in the academic year, we will ask for this money to be paid in advance. **We therefore request that all parents contribute the appropriate money by Monday 4 December 2017.** The only exceptions to this are in Year 5 where an earlier payment date is required for the upcoming Sayers Croft trip, and Year 12 where the payment should be made by January 8 2018.

In the unlikely event that a pupil does not attend a day trip due to absence from school or a behaviour concern, we will not be able to refund individual trip costs, because these costs are already paid in advance. It is our hope that all pupils will come on all trips and this is what we will plan for. For residential trips, where the costs are higher, and there is a reason why a pupil might not attend a trip, e.g. behaviour, exceptional circumstances, any costs that have not already been spent will be passed back to parents.

In Years 6-12, the priority for school and parent contributions is residential trips, with day trips able to be limited to free activities. There are two types of residential trip: Optional/curriculum trips such as the Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, orchestra tours, a trip to Barcelona to speak Spanish, our European trips for all 6<sup>th</sup> formers, will remain funded as they currently are, by a mixture of school curriculum budget, individual or collective fundraising and parent contribution.

The second type of residential trip is “whole year group” where we believe that the whole school/year group benefit from attending the trip, and this shared collective experience is important for the school culture and community.

We deeply value the support of parents in encouraging and preparing their pupils to take a full and active part in the trips outlined in this document. They are genuinely something that is preparing our pupils for life outside of school, and we are committed to making them a success in the years to come, despite the financial pressures facing the school.

I hope you and your children have enjoyed the first half term of the school year and I look forward to welcoming you back on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Best wishes,

Mr Haimendorf, Principal

