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Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had an encouraging start to the 2017-18 academic year, with the new students in Year 7 and 12 appearing to settle in very quickly and excellent attendance rates at their respective standards evenings. Those in other year groups have returned with very positive attitudes, determined to make the most of the year ahead. In the first few weeks of term we shall be making very clear our expectations for all students and giving them guidance on how to get the best out of the year ahead.

Despite the many changes to the examination system, we were delighted with some excellent results again this summer. Although the mixture of letters and numbers used for GCSE grades this year makes comparisons slightly more complicated, 84% of Year 11 students gained the equivalent of 5+A\*-C grades (including English & Maths) in their GCSE exams, with 35% of all grades being achieved at A\*/A (or equivalent) and 82% at A\*-C. Given that boys nationally are significantly outperformed by girls at GCSE, these really are an impressive set of results. Lots of boys achieved A\*/A grades across all subjects and more information can be found in the press release on the school website. We also saw some brilliant individual performances at A-Level this year, including 13 students gaining A\* and A grades in every subject, with the vast majority of all students gaining places at their chosen university, many at some of the country's top universities like Cambridge, Durham, Imperial and St Andrews. 55% of all grades were achieved at A\*-B, with five high-flying students now taking up places on prestigious courses to study medicine. With the next wave of GCSE subjects this summer adopting the new grading system and more A-Level subjects being assessed across a two year 'linear' course, fresh challenges lie ahead for staff and students this year.

Last week we welcomed the following new members of staff and I wish them the best of luck for their future at TBSHS: Mr Albert (Learning Support); Miss Anthony (Cover); Mr Comiskey (Drama); Mr Newsome (Music); Mr Oliver (PE); Mrs Sherriff (MFL); Mrs Taylor (RS&Cit); Mr Thomas (Head of Art); Miss Watson (Biology) and Mr Williams (Head of Business & Econ). They have each settled in very quickly and are already getting to know the students and our systems.

As ever, we have an exciting calendar of extra-curricular events and competitions ahead, with the highlights including our Chamber Concert on 19<sup>th</sup> October, Inter-House Rugby on 11<sup>th</sup> November and this year's musical *School of Rock* on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November. Having had a week of training and our first round of fixtures, the rugby season is already in full swing. It was great to see so many parents at Jobbers Wood on Saturday and, as ever, your support for school events is very much appreciated. This year, I'd like to challenge every parent to come and support at least one event per term, even if your own child is not participating: having a packed audience in the hall makes every performance much more special for the students and makes their efforts to practice and rehearse all the more worthwhile.



**TBSHS: A truly all-round education**



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We continue to work with the local authority and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to advance our plans to relocate the school to the Bishop's Stortford South development within the next few years. The outcome of the consideration on whether this land should be released from the Greenbelt is expected to be known in the spring. This decision will clearly have an impact on our plans and I will keep you informed when we have news.

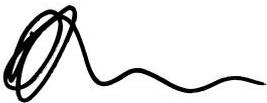
Building resilience in our students is still a major aim at TBSHS. Learning to overcome hurdles and cope with setbacks is an important part of their development, as we try to equip them for life beyond school. Where possible, we try to answer questions with questions, to really encourage the students to think and solve problems for themselves. You can help by encouraging them to plan ahead and take responsibility for what they want to achieve each day, which will allow them to become more independent.

Later on this term we will be holding a 'managing distractions week', with the aim of showing students how to stay focused and avoid wasting valuable study time when it comes to homework and revision. Lots of medical research has shown that young people are becoming more and more reliant on the 'connectivity' offered by their smartphone, often developing a compulsion to keep checking it. With this in mind, students are not allowed to use their phones in school, without explicit permission from a member of staff. This now includes before school, once the students have entered the school site. The one exception is that sixth form students are entitled to use their phones whilst in the sixth form centre.

I would like to thank all parents who have already given up their time to support the school in a range of different ways. The great work of the PTFA and the PSA makes a massive difference to the enriching experience we can provide for our students, and some parents volunteer their time to help out in the library, in departments, or maybe offer a professional service to the school. If you are able to help in some small way, do please get in touch.

Finally, if you have a child in Years 8 to 13, please take a moment to read the accompanying one page Mitre Fund letter and I look forward to seeing many of you at our forthcoming events.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'D' followed by a wavy line.

Mr Dale Reeve  
Headteacher