



**Kingsmead
School**

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Your ref:

Our ref: ES/TB

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Dear Kingsmead families and carers,

It is hard to believe we are approaching the final days of the Spring Term. This means we are two thirds of the way through the academic year, and what a year it has been so far.

This year, without doubt, has been a challenge for our school. We were thrilled to reopen after the partial building closure that impacted all pupils. To reopen and bring our school community back together was fabulous. We were so very grateful for the positive support of the local community, parents and carers. We recognise how challenging it was for everyone affected and we are so impressed by the resilience the pupils showed and how they adapted to the changes to their school routines.

Throughout the closure, the school team worked hard to maintain momentum around all pupils' learning and progress and personal development. This included some wonderful events around Christmas; including the whole of year seven and year eight going to Roller World, a Christmas dinner and jumper day and our Christmas Quiz – well done again to 7N2 who were our winning team! Meanwhile arts, crafts and sports events fuelled by goodies cooked in Christmas baking sessions meant there were some fun festive memories made.

We fully reopened school in February and immediately our year elevens set off for a much needed regroup in the form of a residential trip in the Peak District. Some pupils attended for a day's worth of activities with their peers. All pupils that engaged and attended, despite their exhaustion, came back rejuvenated by the experiences and ready for their mock exam preparation. The opportunity afforded via the Prince's Trust qualification is something that we are very proud to offer pupils as part of a rich array of school experiences available. Thank you again to the staff who stayed away from their own families to make such a worthwhile experience possible and to the staff who kept the school routines running back at base.



Throughout this half term, we have welcome visitors into school to facilitate meaningful and impactful encounters with local employers – key to our work targeting pupils' interests and talents. We had soldiers on site from the local Barracks in Toton, for two days of team activities that saw pupils supporting one another across year groups. The soldiers gave an informative presentation on what experiences an army career offered and welcomed many questions from pupils that impressed them greatly. Team activities then saw pupils building 'communication towers' and testing their physical stamina against some of our TAs (sports professionals themselves) and much fun (and loud cheering in the speed/reaction test) was had by all. We look forward to facilitating a future trip to the barracks for pupils who are keen to see and find out more.

We also welcomed the local Fire Service and their engine on site for another fabulous experience that saw pupils sitting on the truck and asking multiple questions about careers in the fire service. This was followed up by a day at the local station in Chaddesden and is to be followed by further days out for pupils who are keen to explore more. Again, to see our pupils dressed as firemen and women, engaging in drills and understanding the dedication and skills required to work in this critical emergency service, was brilliant.

Pancake Day was celebrated by every class in school with the great 'Pancake Cook-off 2024' that saw some incredible toppings leaving the food room on top of perfectly flipped pancakes. Pupils interested in trying more exotic foods in food technology were given the opportunity to try different meats including: Zebra, horse, crocodile, kangaroo, wild boar and ostrich. Trips and experiences out and about for different groups included a trip to the local Hindu Temple for year 8s, a trip to Sudbury house for year 7s and a Saturday night court-side experience for a group of basketball fans (years 7-10) to watch the local Trailblazers Team play basketball. Our new Games Club has also been set up – resuming on a Thursday night after Easter and offering a range of classic board games, snacks and staff who are ready to challenge pupils to some great board game experiences. A recent visiting University of Derby student on some work experience as part of her PGCE was impressed by the board game skills of a year 8 pupil who has become quite unbeatable in Connect4 Flip! We are excited about further trips, visits and clubs due to be offered in the summer term.

As the term has come to an end, we have been most impressed with our year elevens undertaking their mock exams. This is an incredibly challenging time as the real exams get ever closer and decisions about onward destinations and college and apprenticeship interviews are now being made. We shall continue to support pupils with both their academic, social and emotional health during the summer term so they are as ready as possible for the summer exam season. This will include further trips and experiences to look forward to and aim towards once the exams have finished. Well done also to the pupils in years nine and ten who have been flexible in moving classrooms to facilitate the array of access arrangements that all pupils undertaking exams qualify for and are supported with.

As we break up for the Easter break can I remind you about some key things:

Website: Our school Website is a hive of activity that contains updates regarding pupil experiences in school and shares what they are learning about across different subjects. Be sure to check us out and see what we are up to in school:- <https://kingsmeadschoolderby.co.uk>

Moments Matter; Attendance Counts: We take your child's attendance at school very seriously. With the sun now beginning to shine, we hope to see an end to coughs and colds. If you're unsure about whether your child is able to attend, due to feeling poorly, check the updated NHS guidance to support you in making a decision:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Please speak to your child's keyworkers with regards to their current attendance figures and request further support if required.

Lanyards: A letter was home for you to fill in with your child regarding the wearing of lanyards and badges – an exciting addition to our school uniform that was requested by our pupils in KS4 and pupil councils. Please return the slip as soon as possible so we can get printing badges.

Uniform: Our school uniform expectations are flexible to support pupil need in engaging with our policy. Uniform is available to buy from school otherwise we encourage pupils to wear black. The wearing of any other colour is **not permitted** – please can you support your child(ren) in complying with our expectations. It has also become concerning that some pupils are not wearing appropriate footwear; the risk of accidents, slips, and falls is significantly higher when unsuitable footwear is worn.

The following are not allowed:

- Slippers
- Sliders/flip-flops
- Crocs
- Wellington boots

The school environment is not suitable for the wearing of such footwear, particularly in the food technology room and Gym. Please note the following from our PE Teacher Paul:



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Physical Activity/Clubs: Pupils wearing unsafe footwear (the above) will not be allowed to partake in Physical Activity lessons or after school clubs - Theory Work will be provided during lessons instead in order to ensure the safety of all pupils.

Have a safe and restful Easter break; we shall see you on the 15th April for start of the Summer term!

Kind Regards

Liz Sanger, Headteacher