

12 April 2019

Dear Parent

### **Academic Year 2018-19: End of Year 7 Second Term Review**

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you as the Spring Term closes, marking the end of the Year 7's second Term at Lees Brook. That therefore means our Year 7s only have another 13 more terms to go until they complete their secondary studies with us! Rest assured there will not be a continual countdown from your student's Head of Year, at the end of each term until they leave Lees Brook. This does however, serve as a timely reminder how fast-paced secondary education is and how vitally important it is for all students to make the most of the academic and personal opportunities they are exposed to whilst they are studying with us. On the whole, Year 7s as a cohort continue to demonstrate great levels of school attendance and engagement within lessons. There are lots of students that have 100% individual attendance records to date, also many have never received a single consequence point. If these excellent levels of achievement can be maintained until the end of the term, there will be a pleasing number of students that will be awarded a Golden Ticket Certificate and a small prize. Students that are eligible for this reward really enjoy this recognition and positive praise and it affirms the effort and commitment they have shown so far. I am extremely proud of the fact that the Year 7 leading reward point achiever has over 1200 reward points since starting at Lees Brook in September. This is simply amazing!!

This has been another term of Year 7 individual and group successes and achievements across a broad range of academic and extra-curricular activities. I have been so pleased with how many Year 7s took part in World Book Day/Week challenges and the way that many Year 7s continue to express an enjoyment in reading and excel in Library-based activities. Many Year 7 students have frequently picked up reward points so far because of literacy or library work. There is a weekly Year 7 student award and Form Tutor group award linked to reward and behaviour points which introduces a healthy and purposeful sense of competition across the Year 7 community. Reward points will continue to be an important motivator as we start to plan our end of Year 7 reward trip for those students that achieve the most reward points this year. Last year we took those students with positive attendance records and levels of reward points to a day out at Drayton Manor Theme Park. Students need to continue to focus for the rest of this academic year if they want to be eligible for this year's trip towards the end of the summer term. The March newsletter from Headteacher Zoe House, highlighted a number of projects and activities that Year 7 students have been involved in this term. I am always immensely proud of whenever Year 7s represent the school in any endeavour. I am particularly impressed with the Year 7 Girls Netball Team who equipped themselves very well at a tournament in Littleover last month and the Year 7 Boys who competed well in the Year 7 Sports Hall Athletics County Final this week. Fantastic levels of talent and commitment were shown by both sets of students. We have had a positive uptake as well with Rugby and Football teams and I hope Year 7s look to get involved in the next wave of outdoor summer extra-curricular sporting activities and clubs next term.

Whilst students get daily and weekly reminders about expectations and requirements through their Form Tutors, subject teachers and through assemblies, this letter allows me an excellent opportunity to share some of those messages to parents and guardians alike to facilitate conformity and consistency. The Easter holiday period is often a good opportunity for families and students to check equipment and stationery levels and the suitability of school uniform in line with expectations. Students are reminded that on a daily basis they are required to bring a pen (black or blue), pencil, ruler, eraser, sharpener and calculator. These are minimum expectations. Having spare equipment where possible, is always an excellent idea. It is not uncommon throughout a busy academic year for pens to run out or for items of equipment to become misplaced. However spot checks will take place after to Easter to ensure students are fully prepared to actively participate in lessons. Please support your student to make sure they are fully prepared to complete their final term in Year 7 upon their return. Whilst not a minimum requirement, students often benefit from having access to a red pen, glue stick, crayons and a small mini dictionary. These things would be useful if your student can have these in their school bag in addition to those minimum expected items.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind students about uniform compliance. To make it easier for families, we do not expect students to change the colour of their tie each year. The blue tie that the Year 7s need to wear each day should be kept throughout their five years at Lees Brook. Therefore if students lose or break their tie, this will need replacing promptly, even if this is later on this academic year. Whilst it goes without saying, fully labelling blazers, ties and PE kit is a really important proactive way of facilitating and returning lost or misplaced uniform as quickly as possible. In addition I would like to remind all families about the importance of students wearing sensible and appropriate footwear that complies with the school's minimum expectations concerning uniform. A very small minority of Year 7 students are trying to wear trainers during the school day. It tends to be the same students and this is not permissible. Students that wish to wear trainers whilst they walk to and from school should change into appropriate shoes immediately upon entering the school site. Those students wishing to wear trainers on the astro-turf pitch at lunch time to play football should change into and then out of those trainers whilst they are entering and exiting that specific facility and not when they return to the main school building. Trainers must not be worn at any other times. Maintaining uniform standards that look smart and professional and help create the right environment for learning help maintain high standards and promote a sense of fairness and inclusion for all those who follow these expectations each and every day. Those students that do suffer the misfortune of having damaged or lost uniform should bring in a note from home the next morning explaining the circumstances and when these items will be replaced if uniform cannot be repaired or located. If this note is not provided, Lees Brook staff will make contact via telephone to enquire about the specific circumstances as to why the uniform expectations are not being met. I want to avoid situations where Year 7 students are withdrawn from their timetabled lessons because of uniform, make-up or jewellery issues. Can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your vigilance and support with this and for the overwhelming majority of Year 7 students that look smart and professional each day.

I was delighted that so many of you could attend the Year 7 Subject Evening in March. That evening was a good opportunity for you to hear about how your student is progressing in their studies at Lees Brook and an excellent opportunity to raise questions or queries about particular issues that you may have required further information on. It was a great chance to get to know your student's subject teachers that are tasked with supporting them with their studies during Year 7. If I could take this opportunity to remind you of some key dates for your diary:

Monday 1 July 2019:	The start of the 'End of Year 7 – Examinations' (All week)
Thursday 18 July 2019:	End of Year - Form Tutor Parents Evening (4.00pm – 8.00pm)

Whilst we do not want Year 7 students to be overly worried or anxious about their end-of-year assessments, we do expect students to take them seriously and prepare for them as best as is possible. They should fully participate in any in-class assessment and revision preparation activities set and explored by the class teacher, as well as review work in class books and complete set homework in a timely manner in the run-up to these assessments. Modern revision activities like flash-cards and mind maps often prove very useful for knowledge recollection and recall. End-of-year tests are very important in making sure students are making the required academic progress and can provide key evidence for specific intervention if required, as students start their Year 8 studies.

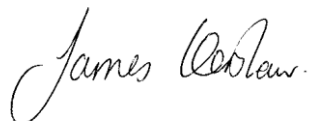
The most up-to-date copy of your student's progress report will be issued shortly. This report shows your student's most recent Progress Indicators for Year 7 and I very much look forward to seeing you all at the final end-of-year Form tutor/Parents Evening to explore the progress your student is making towards the end of July.

I would like to continue to show my appreciation for all your support in setting up your students for success. Please continue to reinforce reminders about the importance of attendance, punctuality and being an active participant in class-based and homework activities. Can I also remind you about the importance of both parents/guardians and students logging on and frequently using ClassCharts. After Easter, there will be a greater reliance on using this software to record and report on homework and less emphasis from teaching staff on recording homework in student diaries. Students of course can still voluntarily do this if it helps them organise and prioritise their own workload but ClassCharts becomes the emphasis moving forward. Therefore it is very important students and parents/guardians know their login details and you can access these via Form Tutors if needs be. At this moment in time, 181 out of 222 parents are using the Parents ClassCharts app which is very pleasing. It does however mean that 41 families have not yet accessed this important piece of software. Remember ClassCharts is free to download and provides live updates on a student's homework, reward points and behaviour points. For your information also, 153 out of 222 pupils are using the Students ClassCharts app. This consequently means 69 students have not personally accessed this software do date. I am therefore concerned that there is a potential for homework to be set and deadlines missed after Easter because these students are currently outside of this communication loop.

Finally, students again should remember the new term is a fresh start for acquiring reward points and thinking about addressing any behaviour concerns. The school community will always believe everyone is able to excel and achieve to their highest potential. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your student to guide them in finishing their first year at Lees Brook in a positive and progressional way.

I really hope you enjoy your Easter holidays.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Kershaw".

Mr Kershaw  
Head of Year 7