



Headteacher: Mr T Burton, MA (Cantab)

Our Ref: JTB/LAB

9 December 2011

Parents/Carers of Millthorpe Students

**MILLTHORPE SCHOOL**

Nunthorpe Avenue  
YORK YO23 1WF  
T: 01904 686400  
F: 01904 686410

E: [admin@millthorpeschool.co.uk](mailto:admin@millthorpeschool.co.uk)  
W: [www.millthorpeschool.co.uk](http://www.millthorpeschool.co.uk)

Dear Parent/Carer

**END OF TERM NEWSLETTER**

The end of term is almost upon us and I thought you might appreciate an update on our recent activities and planned events in Spring.

**Early closure at the end of term**

Please note that school will **close at 12.20 pm on Friday 16 December**. There will be no school lunch served that day, but students eligible for free school meals will be able to collect a packed lunch from the canteen at 12.20 pm. School will begin again at 8.50 am on Tuesday 3 January 2012 (Monday 2 January is a Bank Holiday).

**Free School Meals**

If you are unsure whether your child is eligible for a free school meal, we can carry out a simple check to find out for you. Simply contact Mrs J Deamer (Office Manager) on 01904 686400, or email [freeschoolmeals@millthorpeschool.co.uk](mailto:freeschoolmeals@millthorpeschool.co.uk) and give your surname, date of birth and NI number. We will notify you of the outcome and, if you qualify, you will just need to sign a claim form.

**Dates for your diary next half-term**

There are several events next half-term that I would like to draw your attention to:

- |                      |                                                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday 5 January   | Year 9 Options Evening - 6.00 pm                            |
| Tuesday 10 January   | Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening - 4.00 pm              |
| Wednesday 11 January | Early closure for staff training - school closes at 2.10 pm |
| 12 - 30 January      | Several public exams for Year 11                            |
| Friday 13 January    | Year 11 tracking reports sent to parents                    |
| Tuesday 31 January   | Year 11 Group Photographs - get them to bring a comb!       |
| Wednesday 1 February | Extended Learning Day                                       |
| Thursday 2 February  | Intermediate Maths Challenge (Years 9, 10, 11)              |
| Monday 6 February    | School closed for staff training                            |
| Wednesday 8 February | Spring Concert                                              |

## **Communication with Parents/Carers**

Thank you to all the parents who have given us an email address – we currently have about 90% of families on our database and we would like this to be 100%! Email contact has made it easier for us to contact you. You have told us that you are receiving many more of our letters and our printing costs are certainly lower - always a help! If you don't have access to email at all, don't worry - we will always have hard copies of all letters available in reception and if you have web access, they are on our website. One of our new ideas for keeping you informed about school life is the Headteacher's blog. It has just been set up, and will contain general articles by me and other staff at the school. You can find it at <http://www.millthorpeschool.co.uk/blog/>. So far you can find out about our Parents' Forum on Reporting & Communication, and our growing link with St Patrick's Charity Academy in Ghana. It's not just for me to write to you either - you can add comments to any of the posts made - please do!

## **Student Absence**

Please remember to notify the school office before 10.00 am if your child is going to be absent from school for whatever reason.

For parents of Year 11 students - if your child is due to attend a Sixth Form taster day at another school, please let us know in advance.

## **The Millthorpeian**

I hope you enjoyed our new style Millthorpeian in the Summer. The Christmas edition will be available soon on our website. It is a wonderful celebration of what Millthorpe students are achieving. If you would like a hard copy, please ask your son or daughter to call in to reception to pick up a copy.

## **Bad weather – closure arrangements**

As we approach winter, may I remind you of our arrangements for keeping you informed should there be snow or some school emergency such as a power cut or boiler failure. We will make every attempt to keep the school open. If we decide the school needs to close, we will send a text to every parent who has given us a mobile telephone number as soon as we can. We will also post a message on the home page of our website and inform Radio York and Minster FM who broadcast such information on behalf of schools. Should the weather begin well but worsen during the day forcing an early closure, we will again send out a warning text and post a message on our home page. If it does become necessary to close on one day, please do not assume we will remain closed the next! We will always make every possible attempt to remain open.

## **Please do not drive onto the school site**

To ensure the safety of your child, we try to minimise moving traffic on the school site at all times. Students do not expect vehicles on site and are therefore less vigilant than they would usually be. Parents visiting school should park on Nunthorpe Avenue rather than drive up to the school main entrance.

## **High School Musical**

I hope that like me, you had the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful Millthorpe production of this show last week. I would like to publicly congratulate all our students and staff who took part and shaped the show, particularly its director, Miss Bell. In an era where examination results sometimes seem to be the only product of education, it was wonderful to see our staff and young people creating memories which will stay with them and their parents for a long time.

## **Positive Achievement System**

It is now a term since we introduced our Positive Achievement System, so I would like to give you an update on how it is progressing. We started from the students' views that we should reward those students who "just do the right thing" and tackle disruptive behaviour more consistently. You will know that we give out stamps for good effort and negative comments for poor behaviour.

## **Rewards**

The overwhelming majority of students have demonstrated their good behaviour under the new system. Since September, nearly half of all students have achieved their Bronze Certificate (150 positive stamps). To date we have had ten students achieve a Silver Certificate (300 stamps)!

Year 11 have had to earn their privilege of leaving school at lunchtime by gaining 50 stamps for an "Autumn Pass". 92% of Year 11 have done so - a brilliant response from them. Over a fifth of the year group have already earned both their Spring and Summer passes too! Well done Year 11. For Year 10, I have recently had the pleasure of serving 20 students with the most stamps a Headteacher's Full English Breakfast in our dining room.

## **Negative comments**

You will be aware that we give negative comments for poor behaviour and for not meeting expectations in regard to lateness and homework. We make a distinction between serious negatives (for disruption) and organisational negatives (homework, lateness, lack of equipment, uniform). Over three quarters of our students had no serious negatives this half-term. The overwhelming majority of students are very well behaved.

One area for concern is lateness to school. Our approach is that we will continue to give negative comments for lateness to make the point that it really matters. Lateness affects progress at school and will cause friction in future employment. When students are in detention for lateness, we will be discussing with them how they can be better organised in the mornings to improve.

I know that occasionally a negative comment has not been recorded in the planner. There are sometimes good reasons for this, but if you are unclear about a negative comment, or the reasons for a detention, please just ring and ask.

Finally, please be assured that where there is really serious disruption, I will take a hard line. Verbal abuse directed at a member of staff or violence towards a member of our school will always result in an exclusion from school. The basis of our Positive Achievement System is “we all have a right to feel safe”, and I will uphold this right for students and staff.

### **Values, Outcomes, Expectations**

Last term, I worked with all our students, staff and governors and invited all parents to help define our values, desired outcomes and expectations. We now have the first draft of a leaflet summarising them. Each of the four groups’ views contributed equally to the document. You can see the draft at:

<http://www.millthorpeschool.co.uk/valuesandexpectations.pdf>

I would welcome any comments about it on our [ideas@millthorpeschool.co.uk](mailto:ideas@millthorpeschool.co.uk) email address.

### **School Motto**


Several people have spoken to me suggesting we change the school motto. Our current one is “Progress to Success”. The old Nunthorpe Grammar motto was “Abeunt studia in mores” (out of study comes character).

What do you think? Should we change it? Do you have a better motto for us? Please let me know on [ideas@millthorpeschool.co.uk](mailto:ideas@millthorpeschool.co.uk).

### **Merry Christmas and a successful and happy New Year!**

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first Autumn term as Headteacher. I look forward to working with all staff, students, parents/carers and governors to move our school from ‘Good’ to ‘Great’. After a term full of hard work (particularly for our Key Stage 4 students) I would like to thank all of our staff for their continuing commitment to young people and to Millthorpe School, and to wish all of them, and you a “Joyeux Noël et une Bonne Année”, or perhaps “Feliz Navidad y un Feliz Año Nuevo”, or perhaps “Frohe Weihnachten und ein glückliches Neues Jahr”.

Yours faithfully



**Trevor Burton**  
**Headteacher**