



# Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

**ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE**

Newsletter - Issue 1 October 2020

## Message from the Principal



Welcome to parents of our new Year 7 students, as well as a warm welcome back to all those who are already part of the Soar Valley community. We have had a very smooth start to the year and our students have adapted well to the measures in place to ensure everyone's health and safety. These include a new one-way system, a split breaktime where years 7 and 8 have an earlier break than the older students, separate social spaces for each year group and use of hand sanitizer on entry to every classroom.

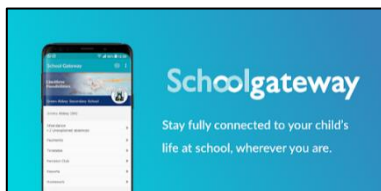
After the half term break, we will be strongly reinforcing the key messages around the importance of good hand and respiratory hygiene. Anti-bacterial wipes will no longer be issued to students in all lessons as a matter of course, but students are welcome to bring their own into school should they wish to do so. Wipes will still be available and used in each lesson for IT and Music. All equipment in PE is cleaned between use.

As the weather turns colder, and with windows open wherever possible, we are investigating a new school jumper, to be worn under the blazer. More details of this will follow shortly.

Developments in education never stand still, and at Soar Valley we are always looking at ways to develop our practice. Recently, all schools in England have had to develop a revised Relationships and Sex Education Policy, and our draft policy is now available for parents to read on our website. Any feedback can be emailed into [enquiries@soarvalley.leicester.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@soarvalley.leicester.sch.uk) or through the SchoolGateway app. Please put 'RSE Policy' in the subject line.

Finally, we look forward to trialling a new way of doing Parents' Evenings next half term. Starting with the Year 7 Settling-In Evening on Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup>, we will be setting up video calls for parents as an alternative to coming into the school building. Dates for other Parents' Evenings can be found at the end of this newsletter.

## SchoolGateway: New function released



As you will be aware we utilise the App 'SchoolGateway' to communicate key information to parents alongside key services, examples of which include; seeing your child's timetable, receiving an electronic copy of their Progress Report, topping up their identity card for meals, seeing what they have had for lunch that day, notifications about Achievement Points and much more. This app

also allows us to send and receive emails and text messages as long as we hold the most up to date contact details for you. If you have changed your details recently please do contact the school to update them.

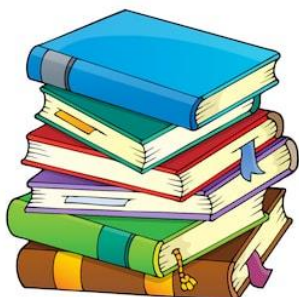
If you have yet to begin using this app, it is a free service and really easy to set up. The basic instructions can be seen below;

1. Go to [www.schoolgateway.com](http://www.schoolgateway.com)
2. When you visit the School Gateway website for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school.
3. The system will then automatically send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and your account will be activated for you.

From October 26<sup>th</sup> we will also be releasing the facility to see Behaviour Points. Behaviour Points indicate any negative behaviour that is recorded against a student's profile. For example, if a student does not hand in homework, their class teacher will record 'homework issue'. As laid out in our behaviour policy, each negative behaviour has a weighting of points attached to it. For example, not completing homework adds 3 points to the student's record.

We currently share Achievement Points through the School Gateway app and, from parental feedback, we know that parents would also like to see the Behaviour Points. Therefore, from the 26<sup>th</sup> October you will be able to see any behaviour points your child receives. This will include the category (e.g., homework issue), the number of points given and from which subject lesson. We would ask all parents to discuss this information with their child to reinforce the key messages about our high expectations and aiming to be the best they can be at all times.

## Updates from the library



Welcome, or welcome back, to an interesting time in the library. We have had to make some changes to how the library works to make sure we are keeping our students safe, and these include measures like quarantining books that are returned before they are placed back on the shelves, and limiting social times in the library to small groups of students. We still run our Homework Club after school every day, so students who need a quiet place to study are welcome to do so.

Of course, some students do not get to spend as long as they would like to in the library. Instead, we have introduced a Click and Collect service, meaning students can select their next library book online. There is a brand new page for the library on the school website with a full catalogue of books, and students can reserve them ready for collection in school. We're looking forward to seeing which books everyone chooses next.

### Top tips on supporting your child's reading

Reading is vital to children's success at school. It can be hard to encourage students to read sometimes, so here are some tips from our library and English team to get you started:

1. Read with your child. Ask them to read some of their book out to you. Some may find this embarrassing at first, but tell them that you want to share their book with them – many will really enjoy this once they get started!
2. Read to your child. Who doesn't enjoy listening to a great story?
3. Visit your local library. They offer a huge range of choice, including things your child may not come across at home or school. Most of the Leicester public libraries are now open, but you may need to book a slot to visit. You can find out more on the council website.

4. Buy books as gifts. Not sure what to get your child for a birthday, holiday, or just as a treat? Consider getting them a book – owning your own books has been shown to encourage children to be keen readers.
5. Be a reading role model. It can be hard to make time to pick up a book, for both students and for adults but, if you fit reading into your daily life, your child is more likely to do the same. We recommend that students read for 20 minutes every day – perhaps you can read at the same time?
6. Ask about their book. Find out what your child is reading, who the characters are and what they think of them, or what's happening in the story. Sharing conversations about reading can really remind students how useful it is, and how much they enjoy it. And if you're reading a great book, why not tell them about it too?

### **And finally – coming soon...**

We have some very exciting things coming to the library this year. One of these is our Soar Valley Best of the Best Book Award. This is a chance for students to read a set of books that have won awards in the last few years, and decide their favourite. More will be announced after half term, but we can't wait to see which new fiction book is the school's favourite.

We are also pleased to announce that soon your child will be able to read online at home! We are setting up an eBook system, meaning any student can access eBooks on their phone, tablet, or PC. This will be great for students who are shielding or isolating, too busy to get to the library in the school day, or just want to try something new that the library doesn't have in yet! Again, we will have more details on this after half term.

## **When D&T meets Science: Forces in Action!**



In recent Design & Technology lessons Year 8 students have been busy exploring different forces and conducting some experiments to test for strength, compression, tension and torsion. They were able to use their knowledge of different materials and learn all about these properties when applying their tests. Well done Year 8 for some really exciting lessons with lots of investigation.

## **Art – Curriculum Developments in Year 7**

The Art department have been busy developing their Year 7 curriculum this year to include dedicated History of Art lessons. Students will be learning all about the Pop Art movement: when it happened, why it happened, key artists that were involved and how it has influenced modern Art. The students and teachers have really enjoyed their first lesson on this and can't wait until the next one!



## College Council

It has been a busy half term, and an exciting one. Year 7 form representative recruitment has begun and students who have been successful in the first stage of the process are currently preparing a speech to deliver to their fellow students. All Year 7 form representatives will be in place by the end of this half term.

We received an incredible 31 applications for the Year 7 College Council year lead role. Applications were strong and it was clear that many Year 7 students had lots to offer. After applications were shortlisted, members from the College Council met to read through and discuss potential candidates. As a result the student leads for Year 7 have now been appointed, and congratulations to Asiya Omar 7.4 and Manav Vashu 7.2.

Also, Head Boy and Head Girl recruitment is currently taking place. The students who have been successful in the first stage of the process are currently preparing a speech to deliver to their year group via a zoom assembly. Year 11 will then vote and the successful candidates will be announced after half term.

Student Leaders are looking forward to carrying out their responsibilities to the best of their ability, and representing their school with pride.

## Distinctive Landscapes

Year 11 students have been investigating coastal features and processes as part of their new unit named Distinctive Landscapes. Students were able to apply their knowledge and understanding, working collaboratively and summarising this on table tops in the classrooms instead of in their books. Students used a range of methods to annotate their coastal features and they thoroughly enjoyed doing this.



## Participation Passport – Year 9 Students Clocking Up the Hours



Year 9 students are being given exciting opportunities to achieve hours for their Participation Passport. Some of our students have been working hard on the display for our achievement board, creating a Halloween themed board which highlights all of the great achievements in Year 9. It is great to see the students so committed to taking on extra responsibilities.

## Careers News



Over the lockdown period a careers education competition was held by a local charity, Leicestershire Cares, and the opportunity was advertised to our students. Students had to research a job, find out labour market information, salary, key skills and qualities needed and daily duties. The research had to be presented in a creative way.



We were very excited that Hana MF in Year 10 won a £25 Amazon voucher for her entry, and Diya B in Year 8 received a certificate for her impressive entry. Well done to both students.

## Dates for your diary



### Parents' Evenings

<b>Year 7 Settling In Evening</b>	<b>October 29<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>
<b>Year 9</b>	November 19 <sup>th</sup> 2020
<b>Year 11</b>	January 21 <sup>st</sup> 2021
<b>Year 8</b>	March 4 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Year 10</b>	March 25 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Year 7</b>	May 6 <sup>th</sup> 2021

### Term dates

<b>Autumn Half Term break</b>	<b>October 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020</b>
<b>Autumn Term ends</b>	Friday December 18 <sup>th</sup> 2020
<b>Spring Term begins</b>	Tuesday January 5 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Spring Half Term break</b>	February 15 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Spring Term ends</b>	Friday March 26 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Summer Term begins</b>	Monday April 12 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Summer Half Term break</b>	May 31 <sup>st</sup> – June 4 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Summer Term ends</b>	Friday July 9 <sup>th</sup> 2021

### Other events this term

<b>Y11 Reports home</b>	<b>October 30<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>
<b>Y8, 9, 10 Reports home</b>	November 20 <sup>th</sup> 2020
<b>Y11 mock exams</b>	November 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2020