

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have been delighted to welcome to TWGGGS new staff this September: Miss Pitts joins the PE department, and both Miss Withers and Mrs Malik have started their teacher training in PE and Maths respectively. Ms Segal, an ex-TWGGGS student, joins the support staff team as a teaching assistant, and we are very pleased that Dr Wilsher, who trained last year at TWGGGS, is now a permanent member of the Biology department. We are delighted that Mrs Twaites has stayed at TWGGGS, now as Cover Supervisor and KS3 Admin Support; Ms Hundall and Mrs Calloway were both on temporary contracts in the Technology department, and it is lovely to have them as permanent members of staff. Mrs Smith is now Assistant Director of Sixth Form, a new post, and Mrs Wheeler and Mrs Sanderson are sharing the responsibility as Teacher in charge of German. We hope that all will be very happy in their new roles.

It has been wonderful to have a full school again since September, and I am full of praise for the way in which the whole school community has pulled together to ensure that school is as safe as it can be in these strange circumstances. Pupils and staff have swiftly adapted to wearing face coverings in corridors and communal indoor spaces, and to the hand-washing/ sanitising/ cleaning regimes, which help to keep us all safe. Pastoral staff are providing superb support for individuals where this is needed, and teachers are now moving around the school to teach classes in year group bubbles. I am very aware of the considerable efforts this requires of colleagues; we are all, I think, staff and pupils alike, looking forward to the half-term break!

The site team worked hard over the summer to prepare the school for full reopening, and I am most grateful to them for their efforts and forbearance, especially as some aspects have had to change over time, inevitably increasing their workload. Mrs Manktelow and Mrs Vallely have done a magnificent job in ensuring that COVID-19 risk assessments and actions are in line with ever-changing guidelines, and we are most grateful to them. We had just updated all of our COVID-19 policy and risk assessments, and I had planned to append these to this newsletter, however late on Wednesday, further revised guidance was issued, requiring another careful review. We are updating our documents, and the amended policy, etc. will be on our website under Information/ COVID-19 in the next few days.

In the meantime, Miss Parkinson is writing to pupils direct, to reinforce key messages as follows:

- When pupils arrive at school, they must wash their hands and then go straight to their designated classroom. They should not congregate in school or around the school at the start or the end of the day.
 - Pupils should maintain a 2-metre distance from staff and not enter staff only zones within a classroom at any time.
- Pupils should stick with their seating plan within the classroom, sitting side by side facing forward.
 - In the classroom, pupils must not move the placement of a table or chair.
 - They should avoid touching displays and other surfaces.
 - As required, wipe specialist equipment or work areas within a specialist room (e.g. a laboratory).
- During breaks, pupils are encouraged to use their outside designated area.
- Pupils need to keep within their bubble and the designated areas for that bubble.
- Pupils must avoid physical contact, no hugs, touching, etc, and maintain as much distance from others as possible, including within bubbles. **Close face to face contact must be especially avoided.**
- Pupils must not share belongings (stationery, food, cutlery, etc) with others.

We would be most grateful for your support in reinforcing these messages. The revised guidance emphasises the importance of ventilation, and we are keeping windows open at school, as well as doors wherever possible. As the weather gets colder, we are keen that pupils stay warm and comfortable. Therefore, when it is cold, pupils may wear white or pale t-shirts under their school uniform, and may wear a blue TWGGGS hoodie or sweatshirt on top of their TWGGGS jumper. Coats and scarves will also be permitted by teachers when it is particularly cold. We would advise pupils to dress accordingly, with layers to take account of varying conditions across the school.

Parents' Evenings – Mrs Wybar

Whilst we were able to hold the additional U6th Form Parents' Evening in early September on the school site, in a socially-distanced way, we are very aware that this is not possible for years where pupils study more subjects or when the transmission rate of the virus is higher. Therefore, we have made the decision to hold parents' evenings virtually using SchoolCloud, and the first of these is after half-term, for Year 11; these parents have already received information regarding this, and we would be interested in your feedback after the event.

There were very positive comments received from Year 11 parents about the recent virtual Sixth Form Options Evening; the material for this, including subject specific presentations, is all on the school website if parents in other year groups are interested.

Sports Hall – Mrs Wybar

Very excitingly, the Sports Hall is nearing completion, and we hope to be able to use it from January, all being well. It will provide a fabulous facility to enhance pupils' education at TWGGS. As you will be aware, the school has been running a campaign to fund this project over the last two years. We have received generous support from parents and are most grateful to those who have already donated to the project. We will be recognising donations above the qualifying level on recognition panels that will be displayed in the foyer of the sports hall; with the benefit of Gift Aid, the qualifying amount would be reached by a donation of £30 a month over 5 years. However, donations of any size would be very much appreciated. The recognition panels will be ordered in early December; if you wish your child's or family name to be included, please ensure that your donation forms are returned before Friday 6th November. Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Julie Robinson at thecampaign@twggs.kent.sch.uk if you have any questions about the project or the campaign.

TWGGS Ski Club is Recruiting! – Mrs Ayton

TWGGS Ski Club train weekly at Bowles Ski Slope and is looking for new members. We compete at the Kent Schools' Ski Championships and the English Schools' Ski Association Championships each year where children race a slalom course on the dry ski slope in teams.

Pupils need to be competent skiers, though previous ski racing experience is not required. Competitors must be able to safely negotiate the slalom course; ideally pupils should have a minimum of 3 weeks ski experience and be able to safely ski blue and red runs. Pupils will be required to wear ski helmets but other ski equipment is available to hire at the ski slope.

As the PE department is heavily committed on many fronts, Mrs Lindsay Ayton has offered to co-ordinate the teams. Please note that there will be no member of staff present either at the competition or during training sessions, and parents will be responsible for their child at all times.

Please contact Lindsay Ayton if your child is interested in joining. lindsay.i.ayton@icloud.com

Sailing Success for Ella Lance – Mrs Wybar

Congratulations to Ella Lance L6B who has earned herself one of the limited places on the RYA/Loughborough College Level 3 Diploma in Sporting Excellence within the British Youth Sailing Programme following a challenging selection process and has also recently competed in the 420 Autumn National Championships out of Brixham, Devon. With 7 races sailed Ella and her crew were the top female boat and came second overall. Well done Ella!

Year 7 Outspark Activity Day - Nell Gorman 7T

Team building day was really fun. There were plenty of amazing activities for everyone to get involved in. The purpose of these was to find the most efficient and quickest method to complete each task. Near the end of the day, we had "one minute tasks" which were really exciting. Pasta pieces were used to count the scores for these challenges. In conclusion, this was a fantastic day and even though it rained (a lot!), loads of fun was had by everyone, creating opportunities for us to make new friends, laugh and connect with each other.

CCF Sergeant Wins National First Aid Award – Major Reynolds

Sgt Anna Smith has recently tested her first aid skills in a traumatic real-life experience, in which her confidence, maturity and courage allowed her to put into practice what she has learned from a range of first aid courses in the CCF. Such quick-thinking and a calm approach have led to her receiving national recognition in the form of the prestigious CCFA National Meritorious First Aid Award.

Together with her family, Sgt Smith was returning from seeing friends in the summer when they arrived behind a motorcycle accident on a major A-road. As Sgt Smith's mother explained, "It emerged that there had been a couple out on their motorbike. Unfortunately the rear wheel had given way and they had both been thrown off the bike and over the barrier on the side of the road." Drawing on her training and maintaining her composure, Sgt Smith spoke to both casualties and carried out an initial assessment. Shortly afterwards, a doctor who had been driving past arrived, and directed her to hold one casualty's head still, in case of spinal injuries. Sgt Smith remained on the scene for the next two hours, while paramedics and police arrived and provided emergency first aid at the roadside. She helped to move the casualty onto the stretcher, using the techniques she had learnt in CCF, and then carry the patient to the trolley for transfer to hospital by air ambulance. Sgt Smith's presence of mind also enabled her to tell the paramedics the medical history of one of the casualties and the medication they were on, as well as what they had eaten and drunk during the day.

The comprehensive First Aid courses offered by the CCF unit at TWGGS range from a six-week basic course, to a six-week intermediate qualification. Skills learned through these two courses are built upon in an advanced 'MASH' (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) weekend every two years at the school. Cadets learn a whole raft of skills, from how to triage patients, to advanced bleeding control, dealing with burns and stitching wounds. The training is practically centred and, as well as achieving success in brigade and national competitions, many TWGGS cadets have gone on to study medicine.

While Sgt Smith was rather shaken by what she saw, she is also rightly proud of having been able to make a difference. Her ability to stay focused throughout such a harrowing event was remarkable and her willingness to be such an able first-responder no doubt made a difference to the casualties involved. As a result of her actions, Sgt Smith was nominated for her award by Major Reynolds and Captain Naismith. Both the school and the CCF unit are extremely proud of her. In recognition of her many other attributes and her adherence to the Standards and Values we support as a contingent (Respect for Others, Selfless Commitment, Loyalty, Integrity, Discipline and Courage), Sgt Anna Smith was recently promoted to Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major for 2020-21.

Careers Department - Mrs Naomi Vallely

I am pleased to relate that, during lockdown and the summer term, Mrs Elinson was able, very successfully, to conduct the last of the Year 11 careers interviews via Zoom, and we ran Morrisby Online testing for those who signed up. We were able to keep in touch with the Sixth Formers and share contact details of recent leavers who were willing to chat to Sixth Formers about their experiences with UCAS and at university, which many pupils found very valuable, without being overloaded; and we encouraged pupils to use PathwayCTM to find out when virtual insight days were running, and for information about apprenticeship opportunities.

Since returning to school in September, the new Lower Sixth and Year 11 careers interviews with Mrs Elinson have resumed first of all via Google Meet, and now in person, in the main, since we have been able to make the careers office Covid-secure with the use of screens and rearrangement of furniture. Miss Hogben kindly took the Y11 Careers assembly earlier this term, using the script supplied by Mrs Elinson and myself, and we have also been able to resume the PSHE sessions taken by Mrs Elinson in form rooms and computer rooms, without hitch! There have been many changes to the way in which careers education, information, advice, and guidance are delivered because of the coronavirus pandemic, with a shift to virtual, for example, open days, talks, employer encounters and practice interviews. Most recently the Year 11 Options Evening was run by Ms Hogben as a virtual event, with great success.

Miss Parkinson and I recently met with Simon Harris from the Careers and Enterprise Company, and with Rachel Quinn, our Enterprise Adviser, with a view to planning some virtual events after half term. These will, of necessity, be smaller events than we have run in the past, and will be tailored to particular groups to begin with. Rachel is also in touch with Ms Sanderson, Work Experience Coordinator, to try to help with planning more virtual work experience opportunities, using her own network, and other organisations. I am pleased to have been able to put pupils in touch with speakers from last year, from lunchtime talks and the Careers Evening last November, and with some Old Girls via the school LinkedIn page. Two L6th Formers have volunteered to be our LinkedIn Champions, and are awaiting a training date to be arranged by Simon Harris, in order to begin taking over the running of the school LinkedIn page, and making others aware of its uses.

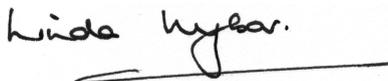
Page Turners Book Group Launch – Ms Sanderson

The annual South East schools book group is back and it has a new name! The book group formerly known as SESTBA will return after half term with a brand new theme and 10 exciting titles to read and discuss. With travel opportunities in the real world currently restricted, the librarians of the participating schools felt it was an ideal time to learn about lives in other countries by reading some great fiction, therefore our theme for this year's award is "Armchair Travel"! We have selected two exciting shortlists full of books (one including Senior Fiction and one purely Teen Fiction) which really give the reader a sense of life as it is experienced in some wonderful locations around the world, from Iran and Saudi Arabia to Japan and the forests of the Amazon, via New Orleans and the mountains of the Himalayas.

Following the success of the Carnegie online book group at the end of the last school year, I shall again be using Google Classroom to host the book group, with 10 separate streams for the shortlisted books and also a general book chat stream. Joining details will be available shortly, however in the meantime please visit the Page Turners website for more information on the chosen books and award www.pageturnersbookaward.co.uk

I very much hope that pupils have been as pleased to be back at school this term, as we have been to see them and to be able to work with them in person. It has been a real pleasure to welcome those new to the school, and we hope that all have now settled happily. I wish you all a pleasant and relaxing half-term break.

With very best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Wybar." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mrs L Wybar, Headteacher