

# Headteacher's Bulletin

## February 2025 (to date) Edition

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the February edition of the monthly bulletin. I hope you and your families are well. Do enjoy reading about life at Ratton School this month – it was a short month due to the mid-term holiday – I hope you got to have some quality family time during this week.

### This month at Ratton School

It has been a short and intense month. Over the mid-term break students and staff were involved in two exciting trips – the ski trip and performing arts trip to New York. I hope all the students involved had a fantastic time and I'd like to publicly thank the efforts of our staff who gave up their time away from school to lead and look after our young people in these fantastic experiences.

We also held trips to Chinatown in London, for our Mandarin students to practice their language skills and immerse themselves in Chinese culture not too far from home. Thanks to the MFL team for providing this opportunity.

Well done to Year 11 students for their conduct during the mock exam period in the two weeks prior to the break. Behaviour and engagement were excellent, and the students really did demonstrate our virtues of responsibility and effort through the process. Teachers will be sharing the outcomes with students in class and using time to give feedback and work on areas for development. It is crucial that all Year 11 students invited to intervention or tutoring sessions do so. Attendance at these sessions has been good so far and will be vital to gain that final push over the line to get the best possible grades.

### Rewilding Project with Treebourne

Mr. Morris Year 8 Leader led on our work last month with Treebourne - [Trees for Eastbourne](#) - to enable over 1,200 trees to be planted on the Ratton School campus. Year 7 and Year 8 students worked with Treebourne in Geography lessons to get out on to the field and get active in shaping our school environment. I hope the students enjoyed their experience – I'm looking forward to seeing the initiative in full bloom later this Spring and Summer. This was a fantastic achievement and one that crucially teaches students about the sustainability of their environment.

### Sporting Success

- **Lana P #TeamYear7** did really well in a regional cross-country competition recently and came 2nd (there were between 150-200 competing in her race from 60+ schools in Sussex!). Lana has now qualified to represent Sussex Schools at the SE Schools Inter-County match at Felstead School in Essex, on Saturday Sat 22nd Mar. Good luck and well-done Lana!
- **Emily W #TeamYear10** recently competed in The Royals Classic Varsity Girls Basketball Tournament and got through to the finals. Emily picked up a tournament MVP Award and we couldn't be prouder of her. Well done Emily, keep up the hard work!
- **Alex T #TeamYear10** for another fantastic boxing achievement at a recent tournament. Once again, Alex represented his club (EB Boxing Club) with pride! Well done.
- **Tinashe M, Junior N and Ted W all in #TeamYear11** all completed a 10-mile sponsored walk last weekend for their Rugby club (Eastbourne Rugby Football Club). They will be going on tour to Cardiff in April and were raising funds for this tour- congratulations to these students.

- A final and huge shout-out and good luck goes to our representing **U16s SSSCA #TeamRatton Girls football squad** who are playing in the finals tomorrow. We wish them all the very best for tomorrow's match. We're all rooting for you!

### Reminders around communication

For new parents and carers, and a polite reminder for existing families, some information and tips regarding talking about any concerns you have about your child at school are below.

#### It is helpful if you can:

Keep in touch regularly with your child's tutor or year leadership team. Raise any concerns with them. Your relationship with your child's tutor and their year leadership team is important.

Reassure your child that you will speak with the school. Talk to the school first. Then you can advise your child with a complete picture of what happened.

Ask for an appointment to talk to teachers. It is not always possible for school staff to meet parents immediately. If it is helpful, they may invite a senior teacher or other key staff, such as the special educational needs coordinator (SENDCO).

Give staff a chance to respond to messages about concerns before taking further action. Depending on the nature of the concern or incident, schools may need a few days to respond after investigating and gathering information.

Staff will aim to respond to emails between 8am and 5pm during weekdays and within 48 hours if your question is not urgent.

### Reminders around attendance

I'd like to continue to highlight the importance of good or better attendance of your child at school. Students in last year's Year 11 whose attendance was above 95% achieved almost a grade higher than target on average. Attendance below 80% meant that GCSE grades gained on average were up to 1.5 grades below target. The evidence really does prove that good attendance means good GCSE outcomes. It is crucial for your child's future life chances that your child does the very best they can in gaining a range of GCSEs at the highest possible grades, particularly English Language and Maths to avoid the need to retake these qualifications at their post 16 provider.

The good news is that attendance at Ratton School continues to remain at the national average and above the East Sussex average attendance rate for secondary schools; thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring your child attends school regularly. However, in line with the national picture, attendance is down locally and nationally versus last year following the pandemic. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's Year Team if you would like to discuss any issues around your child's attendance and we will help you in any way we can.

### Reminders around Uniform and Mobile Phones

Please can we remind parents and carers that hoodies and branded jumpers are not part of school uniform. Students may wear these items on their way to and from school but should not wear these inside the school building or during breaks. Students will receive a signature on their timetable card for each occasion they are wearing a non-Ratton branded sweatshirt or hoodie. Uniform has looked good so far this term, with students looking smart and ready to learn. We've had a range of external visitors who work in schools, who have commented on how smart and consistent our uniform looks – we think it shows pride in, and belonging to, the Ratton School Community.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind parents that we do not expect to see students using mobile phones at school; if we do, they will be confiscated and stored safely until the end of the day for students to pick up before they leave school. This includes lessons, but also break and lunch times, lesson changeover, and at the end of the day before they leave site.

The vast majority of students work with us on this to keep school a safe place and free from any negative interactions on social media during the day. If a student needs to make a call home in an emergency, we can always facilitate this; if you as a parent or carer need to contact your child, please phone via reception and we can find your child to speak with you.

Staying on this subject, Mr. Reynolds, Year 9 Leader, recently let me know about this TV documentary regarding the impact on mobile phone use on adolescents [Watch Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones | Stream free on Channel 4](#) It is well worth a watch as a parent – if you haven't got time to watch you may want to look at an overview here: [This is what happened when a group of children gave up their mobile phones | News Tech | Metro News](#)

Whilst undoubtedly mobile technology has brought many benefits it also has its risks – particularly for the positive social, emotional and academic development of all young people. As a society we have recently seen a deterioration in children and young peoples' mental health and schools often find themselves on the frontline of supporting students and families with managing emotions, relationships, anxiety and depression. We feel that as a school community, based on the growing evidence base that Swiped references, a period during the day away from mobile phone use can only benefit our students not only socially, but also academically, boosting concentration in class and individual general wellbeing. This information has certainly also made me more conscious of how often I use my mobile phone.

## Upcoming Events

This wee is 'National Careers Week', and there are a range of assemblies and lessons happening linking learning with careers. Year 9 had their own focused Careers Day today and on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Peters is again running the 'East Sussex Careers Fair' for schools at the Sports Park on the East Sussex College campus. Both our Year 9 and Year 10 students will have an opportunity to visit a range of stalls promoting and informing about a wide range of Post 16 and careers providers.

Thank you all for your support this month. We really appreciate the opportunity to work with you to help your children succeed in all that they do.

Don't forget, we are still offering a free breakfast to all students from 8am in Refresh. It has been good to see so many students eating a healthy and nutritious breakfast to set them up for the day's learning ahead every day. Many staff also take the time to join students in Refresh at the beginning of the day, which makes for a wonderful community feel.

Best wishes,



**Mr Peever**  
**Headteacher**