



## Principal's Christmas Newsletter

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Now that we are almost at the end of the Semester, students (and staff!) are looking forward to a well-earned rest. This term has been an incredibly busy and fast paced journey with plenty of trips and activities taking place.

### Year 7 A and B Football

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Both squads have enjoyed a number of games since September playing 9v9 on both grass and 3G pitches. We are currently completing our matches prior to Christmas and are hopeful of both teams progressing to the end of season play off finals in early summer. The B squad have performed consistently and have achieved 7-0 and 6-0 victories in their final two matches. Congratulations to all the boys who have regularly attended football club and to those who have represented the school.



### Indoor Rowing

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Thirty of our students from years 7 to 10 were selected to represent Mascalls at the West Kent Indoor Rowing Championships which were held at Greenacre Academy in Medway. A number of these were regulars at the Wednesday fitness club in the school gym and some excellent performances were achieved by a number of our rowers. It is hoped that some will progress to the Kent Finals but this is dependent on other performances in other districts of Kent. Congratulations to all those who showed excellent effort in both the individual and relay races.

### Sports Leaders

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A number of our Year 10 students are following this course in KS4. They have made an excellent start and have already been leading and helping at a number of events in West Kent. They have worked with several local primary schools. Events have included cross-country, sports coaching festivals



and sports hall athletics. They have shown great maturity, effort and responsibility and some excellent feedback has been received from both staff and parents who have attended these events. Congratulations to all and we look forward to further success.



### Netball



The girls have performed extremely well, especially in some harsh conditions on the courts. The stand out team has been year 8, who have consistently played well, which has resulted in 3 wins and only one loss so far this season. We are hopeful for a strong league position, although will need to wait until after Christmas to find our final positions.



I would like to thank our entire PE department Mrs West, Mr Illsley, Mrs Parrish, Mr Beck, Miss Robinson and Mr Charman for their time in ensuring that students have competitive opportunities and a huge number of after school clubs.

### Dance Show



This year's dance show 'Rise unafraid', took place over 4 evenings and following countless hours of rehearsing. The show was created through a collaborative process between staff and students over the last 6 months and I am exceptionally proud of what has been achieved. Dance has grown again this year at Mascalls with our biggest uptake at Year 10 for many years, which shows what an integral part of the curriculum dance is for our students and the academy.



Students recognise the importance of the Arts and the life skills we develop through a creative and physically challenging environment. Our dancers know how to problem solve, work in a team, articulate ideas and opinions and are highly disciplined, giving up their own time on evenings and weekends to make this show a success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Miss Butler, Mrs Belavanis, Miss Horn, Miss Mitchell and Miss Clark for their continued hard work and dedication to the department. They work tirelessly to ensure the success of our students and make this show come to life.



## Trips

The History and Geography departments ran a trip for Years 10 & 11 over the October half-term to the Bay of Naples for 5 days. Staff and students stayed in a hotel on the outskirts of Naples, looking



over the Mediterranean Sea and the Italian Trieste aircraft carrier that was being tested out, a real treat for Mr Neve. From the first day students got stuck in to the Italian cuisine in the local area and at the hotel. The first day of excursions set expectations high for the whole trip, the group travelled to the Amphitheatre Pozzuoli for a guided tour, before heading to the brilliant



Naples underground. The final excursion is a real favourite of the teachers, a trip to Herculaneum to study the incredibly well preserved region also



affected by Vesuvius explosion in AD 79. The following day, students had the opportunity for a breath-taking tour around the Isle of Capri in stunning weather. A laser boat tour got them close to look at the green and blue grotto's, rock formations and the homes once owned by Sophie Loren and Mussolini. The views from the top of Capri were stunning, and the rest of the day was filled with fine food, gelato and shopping. On the final day of activities, everyone finally scaled Mount Vesuvius to stare down into the empty, but still active (!) crater. The afternoon saw the final activity of visiting the famous Pompeii region. Students managed to see the amphitheatre, bath house, temple and theatre along with much more. Once again, students on this trip were a credit to the school and their parents, perfect behaviour and taking a genuine interest in the excursions. We hope you all had a fantastic time, and a huge thank you to [Mr Burton](#), [Mr Neve](#), [Mr Kidney](#), [Miss Simon](#) and [Miss Navarro](#) for their support on the trip.

There are plenty more to look forward to with our upcoming trips, including:

Science Live with Year 11 students, Sociology trip with Year 13, Barcelona with Year 10 and 11, Mary Poppins theatre trip with years 7-9, Warner Brothers studio tour with Year 12 and 13, Bush craft residential with Years 7-9 and PSV Eindhoven football tour with Year 8.

## Compaid

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The MYP at Mascalls Academy encourages learners to become global citizens, understanding their role both within the local community and globally. On Tuesday 3rd December, our Sixth Formers studying Music demonstrated this by performing in a very special Christmas performance for Compaid, a charity that supports people with physical or learning disabilities. Both our Year 12 and Year 13 bands performed some Christmas favourites for the community.



## Tis the Season for Auditions

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Before we head into the Christmas countdown, the Music department held auditions for two events coming up in 2020. The panellists included members of Year 13 who are running their very own Live Lounge event on Wednesday 18th March. We were absolutely blown away by the talent we have in Year 7 right the way through to Year 13.



## Virgin Radio Christmas Competition

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Seventy students from Year 7 to Year 10 all have their fingers crossed that they might win a competition launched by Virgin Radio. The criteria were enthusiasm, cute-factor, creativity and Christmassy-ness! The group worked really hard and they sounded fantastic.

My thanks go to [Miss Couch](#) and [Mr Jones](#) for their work on these fantastic opportunities.



## Christmas showcase

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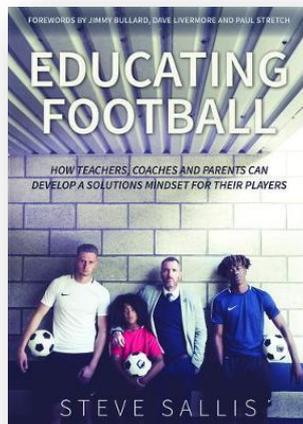
Tuesday the 17th of December saw the final event in the Mascalls Christmas Calendar with nearly 200 students from Year 7 to Year 13 taking part in our Performing Arts Showcase. The 2012 Hall was packed with friends and family supporting our students as they impressed us with their singing, dancing and acting. Special mentions to our Key Stage 3 Drama Club who performed a new take on an old favourite with the panto 'Cinderella is Missing'; the Year 12 dancers inspired us with their highly professional routine; singers, Finley Bell, Josh Alliston, Daisy Robbins and Daisy Glenie impressed with their confidence and singing talent and Year 13 prefects, Sam Cole and Josh Hall read excerpts from Christmas stories by Charles Dickens and Matt Haig.



These events could not happen without the tireless efforts of our staff, the performing arts team led by Ms Butler as well as Miss Couch, Mr Jones, Mrs Ray, Mr Habberfield, Miss Mitchell and Miss Clark were pivotal in the evening's success. Thanks too to our compere, Miss Shaw-Kew and the team of teachers who supported in the set up and decoration of the hall.



## My Future Self Project



Steve Sallis from <https://www.solutionsmindset.com/> visited us last week and spent the day with our year 11 students. Steve has previously worked with professional footballers, the England football team, pop stars, written a bestselling book and appeared on Netflix; so we were very fortunate to have him with us. He spoke to the students about their future self and making those marginal gains to see the improvements they wish to make. The students were inspired by his visit and we hope he will be back again soon! Many thanks to Mrs Gray who organised this event.



## "Knowledge is Power" Sir Francis Bacon

Students (and parents) have been working hard for two semesters preparing students for knowledge organiser assessments. Across approximately 8700 assessments this Semester the average score achieved was 71%, an absolutely outstanding achievement for students which now provides them with a base of knowledge with which to build on and apply to new scenarios and contexts. Over time, the evidence that the long term memory of our students will be improved is building fast, this means students will be able to use their working memory more efficiently in lessons and throughout assessments. Well done and thank you to everyone for your hard work, we remain in pursuit of our magic 80%!

## PTA

In 2020, we will be looking to increase parental involvement in fundraising for the academy by re-establishing our Mascalls' Association of Parents (MAP). Watch this space for further details and dust off your volunteering skills. In an academy of 1300 students and sitting atop the town of Paddock Wood there are plenty of opportunities and potential business partnerships to raise funds for the academy!

## Appointments with staff and social media use



It is inevitable, given the nature of schools and what we do that there will be occasions when parents are concerned, worried or in some cases angry about things that have happened. When such things occur, the school wants to know about it and investigate the situation in order to resolve things as efficiently as possible. There has been a slight increase in parents arriving at reception and wishing to see someone immediately. This is not possible. As an open, functioning academy staff are not available without appointment. Please follow procedure and arrange an appointment at an appropriate time so that we can investigate both sides and resolve any queries. There is also a concern that a minority of parents are not giving the academy an opportunity to do this through the appropriate channels. By using social media to express and share matters, even sometimes commenting about other parents, students or staff is entirely inappropriate and causes distress. We ask that you think carefully before sharing concerns on social media, there will be accusations that we are attempting to stifle free speech, but this simply misses the point. Posting offensive comments online does not solve anything, and like any large organisation we have policies and procedures in place to resolve concerns effectively and fairly, we ask that you use them and contact us first.

### Adverse weather

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Inevitably as we approach the depths of winter the phrase ‘snow day’ begins to appear on the lips of students, rumours will abound, but the decision can only be made by the Principal of an Academy communicated to parents through official channels such as the website and our Facebook feed. As such, I thought it would be appropriate to share with you the factors I have to consider if and when such a decision is made. In the first instance I have to decide whether or not it is appropriate to close the school during *severe* weather based on the ability of staff or students to attend school and to ensure adequate supervision and safety on site.

In terms of *students* attending school, an overwhelming majority of our students travel to school on public transport or private school buses. In severe weather, where transport is significantly disrupted there is reason to believe that if students cannot arrive at school, it may therefore not be possible to travel home.

In terms of *staff* attending school, 90% of staff commute to work 10+ miles and 50% 20+ miles. So, for example whilst in Paddock Wood the weather maybe “light” snow which does not appear “severe,” many Mascalls Academy staff travel from further afield. Often they have very different weather, and in turn very different travel conditions.

In terms of *site safety*, Mascalls Academy is a large site requiring significant student movement between multiple school buildings. Although every effort is made to clear pathways between buildings and prevent the build-up of ice, in the severest of weather this is not always possible. If there are concerns that safety of students will be at risk, closure of the academy is considered. Trust me; it is never an easy decision to make and I appreciate the support and understanding my team and I continue to have from the parents of children who attend Mascalls Academy.

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Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish our Year 11 and 13 good luck in their final mock examinations in January also to thank every staff member, parent, carer and student for their hard work since September and wish you all a very restful, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

Mr W Monk  
Principal