



08 February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been a successful start to the year for our wonderful students and there has been so much to celebrate. Whether the 150 students currently taking part in our Duke of Edinburgh programme, those involved in last week's fantastic school production "Return to the Forbidden Planet" or the wealth of other opportunities. We congratulate all our students who have seized the opportunities on offer this term.

It has been a busy start to the Spring term, which seems to have flown by! I thank everyone who attended our Information Evenings and our Year 11 Support for Success evening last night. I thank my colleagues for providing such valuable and helpful information. If you were unable to attend any of these evenings, or indeed require further information, I signpost you to our school website, where you will find a wealth of information about our Post 16 offer, how to support your child in Year 11 and the forthcoming Year 9 options process.

I have included information in this letter, not included in The Ammonite, to provide you with key updates and useful information. I have waited until this week and the final interviews to be able to update parents in one communication with regard to our staff changes.

### **Teacher Recruitment**

We were delighted to welcome at the start of Term 3 Mr Edward Taylor, Head of Computing and IT, and for Mrs Chapman to start her new role as Director of Post 16. Mr Taylor, like Mrs Chapman, is a former Wellsway student and joins us from St. Gregory's, Bath. It has taken some time to secure a Head of Computing in a very challenging recruitment market and we are pleased to welcome Mr Taylor and the expertise, skills and experience he brings to support such a fundamentally important area of our curriculum.

There has been a lot of news coverage about the national shortage of teachers in both retention and recruitment, even before the pandemic started. In the last twelve months, like all sectors, we have found it incredibly difficult to source either support staff or teaching staff. We have been very busy with recruiting staff for Term 3 and for September 2024, and look forward to the following teaching staff joining us in September: Mr Sallows and Miss Northover (Product Design), Miss McQuade (Maths), Mrs Rapps (Science), Miss Levett and Miss Andrews (English), Dr Gibbons (Computing and IT) and Miss Martin who will take over as Head of Business. In addition, from Term 5, Mrs Steele will take over as Curriculum Director for Humanities, following Mr Whittle's relocation to Australia at the end of the summer term.

We have also welcomed during Term 3 Mrs Taylors-Evans (Product Design), Mrs Vaid (Science) and Mr Oxley (Product Design), Mr Dravie-John (Business), Ms Mathur (Maths).

I would also like to take this opportunity to celebrate and recognise the hard work and dedication of a number of our staff who left Wellsway School/IKB at the end of Term 2 or Term 3. Reluctantly, Mr Radbourne, Miss Smith, Miss Ware and Miss Wright took opportunities as they appeared in areas of the country they had been hoping to relocate to for September 2024. We were very sorry to see them

leave earlier than planned, as they were to leave their teaching groups. We also paid tribute at the end of term 2 to Mrs Hallett, Learning Mentor for Burnett House, who has taken retirement and for her support of many students over her time with us. We have also welcomed Mrs Hurlow (Learning Mentor for Burnett House) and Mrs Hunt (Student Support Administrator) who replaces Miss Snook.

Mr Comber will also leave the school, having served as a member of the senior leadership team and more recently as the lead for PE and Performing Arts. He takes up a new role nearer his family at the start of Term 4 and we thank him for his considerable service to the school and commitment to many of our sports teams. Miss Barron will take over as the Curriculum Team Leader for PE. We will also be joined by Mr Bonar-Foster as a teacher of PE.

I'm also delighted that, following Mrs Ware's relocation, we have internally been able to appoint Mr Simpson as the Curriculum Director for Key Stage 5 English. Mr Simpson joined us in September 2022 after teaching in Cambridgeshire after completing his degree and MEd at Cambridge University.

I know changes in staffing are disruptive for students because teaching is built around relationships. We have experienced an exceptional period; our staff and, in particular our Curriculum Directors, have been working tirelessly to ensure the disruption is minimalised and to try and recruit suitable staff.

We look forward to welcoming our new colleagues in September - more information will follow at the start of year - but after seeing so many talented staff leave the school, we are pleased to be welcoming some equally talented new colleagues.

### **Staff Absence**

Unfortunately, we do experience from time-to-time unplanned long-term absence, sometimes linked to the inability to recruit in the current market or during term time. It is not always possible to communicate on all staff absences, but we will directly contact parents via our Curriculum Directors on arrangements that do change with subject areas for any long-term absence.

You may be aware that schools in our local area and nationally have been forced to scale back opportunities for students, due to the unusually high levels of seasonal illness we have experienced in Terms 2 and 3 both for students and staff. Unlike other schools at this stage, we have not had to cancel planned trips or events, arrange for classes to be supervised in silence in halls with senior staff or close the school to year groups.

As a result, in recent weeks, alongside planned absence (to cover trips and activities for students) and an increase in unplanned absence, some groups have experienced an increase in the number of lessons taught by cover or supply teachers.

We understand, from a student and parent perspective, there will be concerns but please be assured we are doing everything within our power to monitor the situation and continue to provide the provision in subjects we want to ensure.

I thank you for your patience and understanding while we have worked to find solutions to these unplanned circumstances.

### **Newsletters**

Each Ammonite newsletter will continue to be the way we communicate and update parents and celebrate the achievements of our students across a wide variety of opportunities, and this newsletter continues to shine a light on the achievements of all students.

If you have not had chance this year to read either The Ammonite <https://www.wellswayschool.com/news-and-events/> or the IKB newsletter <https://www.ikbacademy.org.uk/parents-and-carers-information/#newsletters> , I hope you will be able to find a small amount of time to do so. They are full of examples of collaboration, work and celebrations of our wonderful young people and hardworking staff.

#### Key dates for Term 4

- Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February, Futura INSET Day, school will be closed for students.
- Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February, Term 4 starts.
- Year 9 Parent/Carer Evening (remote) on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February
- Year 11 Internal Exams start 26<sup>th</sup> February
- Year 9 Pathways Evening on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February
- Year 8 Parent/Carer Evening (remote) on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March
- Year 13 Supporting Success Evening on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March
- Year 10 (IKB) Work Experience Placement 1 25<sup>th</sup> March

We would like to thank all parents and carers for their comments about how we can improve both schools, through the recent Wellsway parent/carers questionnaire. We will, as a result of feedback, be undertaking a review with you of the current remote parent/carers evenings to ensure we provide an effective way of working together around key conversations for your son/daughter.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking you for your continued support of Wellsway School and IKB Academy.

Yours sincerely



**Rob Pearsall**  
Headteacher Wellsway School and  
Executive Head of School IKB Academy



**Pete Headeach**  
Head of School  
IKB Academy