Dear Parent/Guardian

**End of Term Letter - Autumn Term 2023**

As we approach the end of the longest term of the school year, a very full 71 days, I wanted to share with you some of the highlights of this term. As you know King David is always an exceptionally busy place and our young people certainly make the most of the opportunities available to them here. This past term has been characterised by the pupils’ stoic and resilient response to the ongoing war on terror, and their ability to show both compassion and deep insight into the conflict and beyond.

This term several Year 9 pupils participated in the GCHQ National Language Challenge. These students faced a series of language-themed challenges on an online platform, aiming to score highest number of points. Over 500 schools participated in the competition. Impressively, all King David teams finished within the top 5% nationally, with the winning team securing a place in the top 2%. The winning team was 'Frantic sparkling cricket'. This is an exceptional achievement for all teams, who impressed with their commitment, enthusiasm, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Our musicians treated us to a wonderful Autumn recital on Tuesday 28th November. This was an incredibly uplifting evening with a wonderful range of music and performers, including a sixth form band singing traditional Israeli folk songs. The theme of the concert “where words fail, music speaks” was very apt for the evening. We also enjoyed the school’s first ever ‘Singing Day’ earlier in the term where pupils experienced the enjoyment of singing together as a community.

Our pupils have had sporting success too with gold and bronze medals for our boys and girls doubles in the Manchester Schools’ badminton championships. We’ve had interhouse competitions in football netball and swimming this term, with high levels of participation and great competition in all events. Our girls’ football teams continue to progress in the Manchester Schools’ Cup. My thanks to the PE department and to all those staff who’ve given time to enable our pupils and students to participate in the wide range of extra curricular activities they have access to here.

I’m delighted to announce too that for the first time the school have been awarded the PaJeS Wellbeing & Me award which recognises the good practice of leadership and staff in embedding a positive wellbeing culture within the school. I would like to thank all the staff for the work that has gone into this recognition but particularly Miss Ainsworth for leading on this important area. I look forward to receiving the award on behalf of the school in London in January.

On Thursday 30th November we were privileged to host a visit from three families who were directly affected by the terrorist attacks on Israel. In very sensitive and moving testimony the whole school listened to them tell their personal stories. We continue to pray for the safe release of all hostages, and that peace returns for all affected by the conflict soon.

Our children have taken part in a letter writing campaign to our modern-day Maccabees, IDF soldiers. Pupils of all ages wrote letters of thanks, support, and gratitude, and expressed their heartfelt appreciation for all they do to protect Israel’s borders and population. We welcomed many guest speakers, highlighted by Stand With Us Senior Educator and world-renowned expert on all things Israel, Charlotte Korchuk.

The school’s charity this year is Magen David Adom UK. In October Daniel Berger, their chief executive, came to speak to the school about the work that MDA do. We have already held a bake sale, school concert, sponsored silences (which teachers always appreciate!) and we know that many of our young people have engaged in their own fundraising endeavours. We are proud to get behind this very worthwhile cause and we are sure that the pupils’ enthusiasm and motivation will carry through 2024.

In a number of my end of term letters to parents I’ve appealed for much needed support with our parental volunteers’ rota. Thank you to all those parents who have responded this term. It is reassuring each morning and afternoon to see a strong presence of high viz jackets around school. This, together with the excellent response from the CST and Greater Manchester Police, has helped to reassure our parents and children that they are safe in school. On behalf of the school I would like to thank everyone who has played a part in this.

Spending so much time outside the school gates this term has made me aware of a number of safety issues that I feel I must raise with parents. You’ll remember that I wrote home a few weeks ago at the request of the Police to remind parents who drop off or pick up outside the school gates that you should 1 – not park on the yellow zigzag lines, and 2, - phones should be ‘hands free’ whilst driving. I’m also concerned about the behaviour of many parents, and some children, on Bury Old Road. I have seen far too many parents simply crossing the road outside the school gates, sometimes with small children in tow, or even pushing prams out in front of them when there is a proper pedestrian crossing just a few meters down the road. This isn't safe. I will challenge any of the pupils and students I have responsibility for if I see them doing this, but we do need all the adults to set the right example please. Inconsiderate parking, including blocking the driveways of the schools’ neighbours, and unsafe behaviour by parents on the roads around the school give our neighbours a bad impression of the behaviour of some of the adults associated with this school. I know that you will understand the importance of being good neighbours and creating the right impression in the school’s neighbourhood, as well as setting a good example to our young people and doing everything we can to keep everyone safe.

We say farewell this term to Mrs Watson and Mr Kavanagh. Although they’ve only been with us for a short period of time, we’re grateful to them for the expertise they brought to the Science Department. Their departure has necessitated some tweaks to some pupils’ timetables which I understand Mrs Basger has already informed you about.

Last week the whole school celebrated the festival of Chanukah, each year group had an opportunity to play Chanukah Bingo for prizes and vouchers. We also played dreidel, and ate too many doughnuts and chocolate coins. The children have enjoyed listening to familiar Chanukah songs during lunchtime and children and adults have sung along with smiles on their faces. Many of our children participated in the CTEENS menorah lighting campaign, where more than 200 pupils lit their menorahs, took selfies, and entered the competition each evening. All of our year 7 and year 8 pupils have also visited Heaton Park synagogue this term to help them learn more about Jewish traditions and practice.

This is only my third year at the school, but I have never felt more proud of the community I serve. The sense of community in school at the moment is palpable. The support that I’ve seen from pupil to pupil, and from teacher to pupil and vice versa has been truly wonderful. They say that adversity brings out the best in people, we are certainly seeing that in school at the moment. Terrorists fail when their actions unite us rather than divide us.

“a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness”

I do wish you all a very peaceful winter break and a Happy New Year.

<https://www.kdhs.org.uk/wellbeing.html>

**D John Dalziel**

**Headteacher**

**King David High School**