

Issue 19: 21st July 2023

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Families

It is hard to believe that another school year has almost finished, providing us with an opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed, say some goodbyes and look ahead with hope to the new academic year.

There is no doubt that the last academic year has seen education return to a place that we can recognise from the 'time before the pandemic' as, unlike last year, we have not been faced with the restrictions, disruptions and many of the personal challenges we faced as a result of COVID. This has meant a time of greater 'normality' in terms of experiences for young people and the opportunity for us to continue to evolve, develop and improve our provision here at Ansford. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that whilst the landscape is recognisable, it is not the same and there are new challenges for young people, their families, schools and wider society that have arisen as a result of the last few years. It's important that we recognise, acknowledge and keep these in our sights and remain agile in our approaches so that we can support our young people to achieve their best, whatever their starting point and wherever they aim.

Reflecting on 2022-23

The new year started with the roll out of our new behaviour systems and approaches which have given much greater clarity about our expectations, consequences and reward systems as well as the launch of ClassCharts to help staff, students and families engage in this part of school life. We have really seen the impact of these developments which has also been acknowledged by our regular, external visitors to the school who have noted that the "school has made significant progress in all of the main areas". We're not at the end of the journey yet but we know that what we are doing to improve is working. We are really proud of our students and the way that they have responded throughout the academic year and we are confident that this upward trajectory will continue.

This academic year has been full of events to support the development of our students beyond the classroom. These have included:

- Y10 Theme days exploring Beliefs and Values
- KS4 Geography Field Trips
- Primary Sports Festivals
- Y5 Performing Arts workshops
- STEM events
- Y9 History Trip to MSHED
- KS4 Art and Photography London Trip
- Y7 Exeter Maths Circles Competition
- GCSE Drama Trip to London
- Interform Competitions
- Outreach work with Avon and Somerset Police including Escape Lines and Martial Arts Personal Safety
- Oracy workshops
- Sports Days
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards
- Rewards and Recognition events

In addition, there have been an incredible range of opportunities for our students to develop a wider awareness of next steps, education beyond school and careers through University Visits, College Taster Days, Careers Trips and

Y11 Mock Interviews - with one really significant achievement that 100% of our Year 10 students engaged in work experience this academic year. This is really impressive and we are very grateful to Wendy Watson, our Independent Careers Adviser, for her relentless commitment to supporting students in this area.

We have also been fortunate to see the return of some special events to the Ansford Calendar. The autumn term ended with the return of our school productions - ELF fever spread throughout the school and all involved ensured that this will be a production that will not be forgotten and will be a hard one to beat next year. In the spring term, we enjoyed the return of the Public Speaking competition, Youth Speaks where our Y8 orators were impressive winners of the 1st round. Overseas residential trips were also firmly back on the calendar with visits to France and also our Ski Trip at Easter.

We are very proud, as a small secondary school, to be able to offer such a wide range of experiences for our students as this is such a key part of them growing and developing into the best version of themselves that they can - which is, after all, at the core of our school values and ethos.

Farewell to Staff Leaving Ansford

As is usual at the end of every academic year, we must sadly say farewell to a number of staff who are leaving Ansford ready to embark on new challenges in the new academic year: Mrs Switzer who has worked with us for a short time as a teacher of Geography and who has played a key role pastorally supporting students with their fundraising endeavours; Mr Noott who has worked at Ansford for the last 3 years as Head of English, also playing a key role in developing Literacy across the curriculum and working as part of the school's Senior Leadership Team; Mr Cocks who has been teaching Science at Ansford since September 2020 and leading on KS3 Science; Mr Nickson who has taken on many roles at Ansford in his time at the school including teaching Art, Food and Graphics as well as supporting many extra curricular activities, most recently the Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and finally Mrs Cole who has been an integral part of our SEND Support Team as a Teaching Assistant for many years working closely with individual students, in class and as an ELSA.

We wish all of these leavers the very best with their pastures new, whether that be retirement, promotion or an adventurous change in direction and a new career. All of their work, however long their service to Ansford, is really valued - without a great team of staff a school is only ever just a building - it is the people who create our community and make it into a place with a beating heart and every person plays a part in that. Needless to say, we have been working hard with recruitment over the last few months and will share details of our new joiners with you in the first *Families Bulletin* of the new academic year.

Finally, I would like to make you aware that as the academic year closes, we have several members of our Governing Board leaving their lengthy voluntary service to enjoy retirement or move on to other ventures: Chris Culpin, Andrea Maistrello and Alison Bennett. The work of a governor is unseen but is integral to the success of any school community. We are really grateful for their many years of service, we wish them well and we hope that they will continue to remain connected to our wider community as part of our extended Ansford family.

Looking Ahead to September

It is important that students return prepared and ready for the new academic year and Ms Hirst and Mr Mitchell have been leading assemblies this week with all year groups to help students to do that by reminding them of key expectations for September, including information about uniform, equipment and behaviour systems. Please take note of the entries below from Ms Hirst and Mr Mitchell which add a bit more detail for parents and carers. Whilst we have not made any changes to our uniform requirements, we have created a useful document which details more clearly our expectations and that is linked for you [HERE](#) Please do take the time to check this before purchasing new uniform items during the summer holidays.

We are currently building a new website which we hope to launch at the start of the new academic year. Our aim is to ensure that it is much more functional with easy access to key information for families. We will update you about this at the start of the academic year.

Finally...

For now, it just remains for me to wish you a very happy summer break. If you are planning to get away, I hope that your plans run smoothly and that those of you unable to take a break can enjoy some sunshine and some family time. Thank you for all of the support you have shown us over this year and we very much look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Rachel Purnell
Headteacher

Academy Calendar: Key Upcoming Events

| Week | Date in | Event | Location Timing | Staff Contact |
|------|-----------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Thurs 24th Aug | GCSE Results Day | | Mrs Dyal Mr Musson |
| 1 | Wed 6th Sept | Year 7 and Year 11 return | | |
| 1 | Thurs 7th Sept | All students return | | |
| 1 | Fri 8th Sept | Student Leaders Training | | Mr Mitchell |
| 2 | Tues 12th Sept | Biometric scanning | All year groups, PA2 | Mrs Bevan |
| 2 | Tues 12th Sept | Individual Photographs (Year 7 and Year 9 only) | PA2 | Mrs Bevan |
| 2 | Weds 13th Sept | Year 10 Information Evening | PA2, 6pm-7pm | Mr Musson |
| 2 | Thurs 14th Sept | Year 7 Meet the Tutors | PA2, 5pm-6pm | Ms Hirst |

Notices

From the Safeguarding Team

Summer Holiday Support

Attached [here](#) are the details of a range of services and organisations that provide help, guidance and support over the summer holidays and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact them if needed. Parents can also call the Police on 111. Our safeguarding email address will be monitored over the summer break:
safeguarding@ansford.net.

From Ms Hirst, Deputy Headteacher

Uniform

We expect all students to return in September in full uniform; the uniform list is linked above in Ms Purnell's entry. The vast majority of students are always very well presented but some girls' skirts are inappropriate for school; can we ask parents to ensure that skirts are not made of a stretchy fabric and are of a suitable length. Jewellery should be discreet. We have always been very supported by parents in our drive to keep standards of uniform high; if any student arrives at school without appropriate uniform then we will call parents and ask them to drop it

into school or provide a suitable replacement for the day. We have a large amount of donated uniform if any parent wishes to purchase items for their child/ren.

Online courses

My thanks to a Y7 parent who has made the school aware of a range of free online courses offered by Somerset Council over the summer holidays which are worth over £100 per person are provided with fully funded access to all residents in Somerset. The online offer covers lots of topics including:

1. **Pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby**
2. **Understanding your baby**
3. **A sick or preterm baby in hospital and at home**
4. **Understanding your child**
5. **Children with additional needs**
6. **Understanding your teenager's brain**
7. **Feelings and understanding your brain (for teenagers)**
8. **Understanding children's mental health and wellbeing**
9. **Relationships**
10. **Impact of the pandemic**

This offer is part of Connect Somerset. It's universal in the truest sense, enabling anyone to *pick-a-mix* topics that are personally relevant to Parents, Stepparents, Carers, Grandparents and Parents to be. This universal offer allows participants to complete these courses without providing any personal information, except an email address to enable participants to track their progress and login.

To access the courses, go to <https://inourplace.heiapply.com/online-learning/> and put in Connect Somerset's unique access code "dragon".

From Mr Mitchell, Assistant Headteacher

Essential Daily Equipment

In order to reduce wasted learning time, and to encourage all students to maintain excellent organisational skills, the following items are required each day:

- Black ball point pens
- A purple pen [used when responding to feedback]
- Pencils
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Pencil sharpener
- Compass
- Protractor
- Compass
- Scientific calculator
- Water bottle [refill stations are available during break and lunchtime]

Students will also need to be mindful of other items which are required for practical lessons such as PE or Food

Practicals.

If your child travels using one of the school buses, they must ensure they have a valid bus pass each day. The drivers reserve the right to not permit students onto the bus if a pass cannot be produced when asked.

GCSE students will also find it useful to bring the following items to support their learning and exam preparation: revision cards, highlighters, folder with plastic wallets.

Class Charts Updates

Class Charts is a vitally important tool for staff, students and families. The app/website allows us to provide real time updates on:

- Positive conduct
- Behaviour concerns
- Detention bookings
- Homework tasks and deadlines
- Reward events and gifts

From September, students and families will be able to see the comments that members of staff include on all logs, allowing you to understand the context of incidents, allowing you to address and discuss these with your child.

Our detentions systems have also been updated ahead of September, with students being introduced to these in assemblies this week. All bookings will be made on Class Charts, parents will be able to view bookings when they are made, allowing you to potentially make alternative plans for transport. It is worth noting that the vast majority of students rarely, if at all, receive a detention, however we always feel that transparency and communication is vitally important when making changes to systems.

From September, there will be 5 types of detentions, each serving a different purpose, the following summary will help to clarify each, please note the examples in the chart below are not exhaustive:

| Detention Type | Details | Examples of reasons | Overseen by |
|-----------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Lates | Break time in PA2 | Lateness to lessons Lateness to school | Senior Leader |
| Teacher | Break or lunch time, location arranged by teacher | Disruption to learning Failure to complete tasks Failure to complete homework Not treating peers, staff or resources with respect | Individual teachers |
| Learning Detention | 45 minutes after school on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday | Failure to attend a teacher detention Persistent disruption to learning Failure to meet key deadlines Leaving lesson without permission Truancy from lesson | Head of Department and a teacher |
| Pastoral Detention | Lunchtime | Poor conduct out of lessons Poor behaviour on school buses Persistent lateness Unkindness to peers Refusal to hand over mobile phone | Head of Year |
| Senior | 90 minutes after | Failure to attend detentions | Senior Leader |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| Leadership Detention | school on Friday | Disruptive behaviour in a detention or retracking Refusal to follow instructions | |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|--|

Our retracking base will continue to operate next year. Places are limited each day and often reserved for serious incidents which require further investigation or dedicated time to discuss and review choices made by the student. These bookings will also be made via Class Charts, which will replace the email currently sent by Mr Higgins.

From Mrs Comyns, Business Manager

Donations

If anyone has any books and/or uniform they would be happy to donate to school, please drop it into reception.

Catering, advanced warning

In September we will be returning to students using their fingerprints to pay for their food in the canteen. This speeds up the queue considerably giving them longer to enjoy their break times and is more secure than using cash or PIN numbers, although those options will remain. You can find further information on this at https://www.ansford.org.uk/news_and_events/school_meals

The aim is to register students for this during the second week of the Autumn term. In order to register students for the thumb print, permission will need to be in place; we hold consent for a proportion of students and further details of how others can give consent will be sent out in September.

From Ms Perkins, SENCo

Year 10: Geography Field Trip to Swanage

A big well done to all the Year 10 Geographers who persevered through the rain last Friday at Swanage. Despite the weather, they all remained high-spirited and even managed to have a fish and chip lunch. Unfortunately, we did not collect the fieldwork data required, so we will arrange to go again early in the Autumn Term. Pray for a sunny day!!

From Mrs Rice, English Teacher

Page-Turners

Ten of our creative writers in Years 7-9 have entered the 'Unsolved' national mini-saga competition, writing a 100 word story in the crime or mystery genre. Here are the final four...the last student took it a step further and wrote an additional poem, included here instead of her story. Well done to all the entrants, and good luck!

Icy fingers grabbed my arm as I inched through the darkness. I lunged forwards to escape its grasp. A few metres away I could just about see light shining through a gap in the shadowed mystery. I couldn't bear to look back and see who was gripping my bony arms.

But then I heard a voice say in a terrifying whisper, 'Where do you think you're going?'

I turned round to see a plain white face with yellow, glowing eyes and long, blood-curdling claws. It then let out an ear-piercing screech, and I was on my own...

Molly H

Circle of Death

Scalpels. Good tools, right? Used to perform life-saving surgeries, also used in a laboratory, making them innocent and in no way lethal, right? Wrong. Especially not when they get into the wrong hands.

Four years ago, a woman was killed. Her name? Katrine Langrick. Brutally murdered, inside the comforts of her own home. The only abnormal feature was the circle carved into her stomach. After excessive studying of

the body, it is apparent that the circle was made with a scalpel.

Now, a new crime case has resurfaced. The only abnormal thing? A circle intricately inscribed into the victim's stomach.

Maddie J

The Day I was Kidnapped

I looked out of the window in the early morning of daylight when a hand grabbed at my face. But before I could gather my thoughts I was stuffed into a bag. I couldn't scream; I was petrified. Then I felt a car moving beneath me. Oh no... if I went too far away from my home, I wouldn't know the way back .

Then the car stopped. I was thrown out of the car on a pile of sticks. I looked out of the bag and peered around. I was in a forest too far from home.

Oh my God!!!

Summer W

Unsolved mysteries,

Murder no-one sees,

No witnesses to the scene of the crime,

Not knowing the date or time,

Lots of people going missing,

Damage, danger, lots to bring,

A complete mystery,

Is it him, her, or me?

We'll just see...

Who could it be?...

There's no evidence...

Now we wait in suspense...

People start to disappear,

Roaring blood pounding in my ear,

Filled with lots of fear...

The murderer is near,

Secrets to discover,

Murder like no other,

Blood everywhere,

Now it gives us a scare,

This story's never-ending,

Nightmarish, never-mending,

It started fine, now it's evolved,

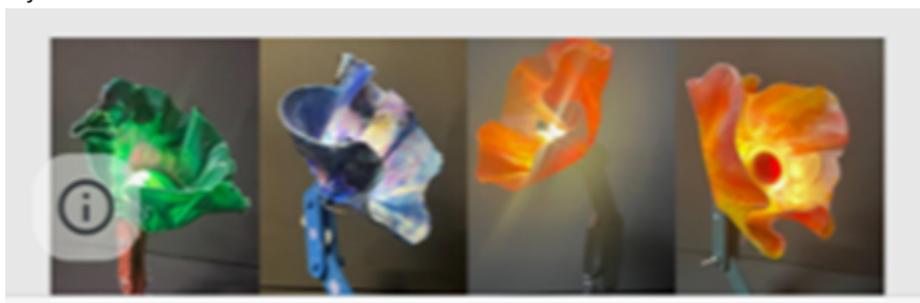
Secrets, unsolved.

Saffron M

From Mrs Swallow, DT

Bottle tops

Please can you save your bottle tops for the DT department over the summer holidays, lots needed for an exciting, new, sustainable project!

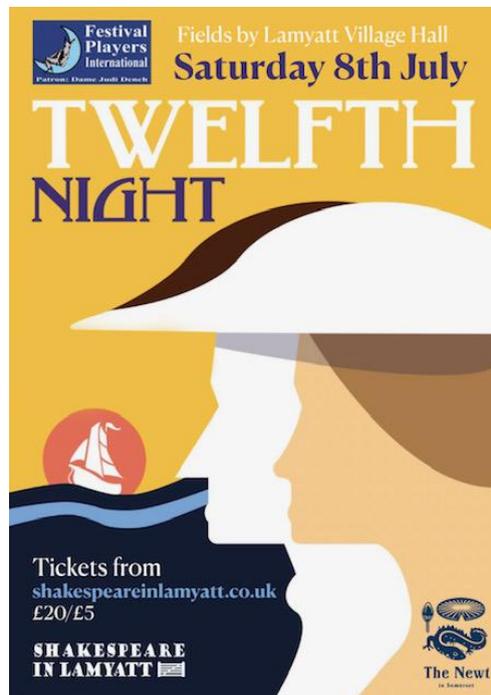


From Mr King, Facilities

Water Safety

Please have a look at [this poster](#) for some important safety advice

Community News



Current Vacancies

For more information on any of the vacancies listed below please visit the school website/vacancies page or click on the links below.

Governor Vacancy



Would you like to shape the future of our thriving academy?

Vacancies have arisen for a Parent Governor on the governing body.

Becoming a school governor is a rewarding and challenging role and will allow you the opportunity to use your skills and attributes to have a positive impact on the education of all the students in our school. Governors work closely together and play a vital role in the strategic direction of the school, working with the Principal and other senior members of staff to ensure that each of our students can reach their potential and be the best they can be. You will be able to develop and learn new skills in a board-level environment, take on different challenges and work as part of an established and successful Governing Board.

Governors need not be experts in the field of education. What they do need is an interest in the school and the welfare of its students, together with the time, energy and willingness to get involved. As well as attending Full Board meetings, attendance at committee meetings is also required. The frequency of meetings, and therefore the time commitment, has recently been reduced.

We are particularly interested in self-nominations and expressions of interest from individuals with experience and skills in the following areas:

- Finance
- Leadership

Contacting Us

If you are interested in becoming a governor and would like further information please contact our Clerk clerk.governors@ansford.net

Do you have the time and skills to be an examinations invigilator?

We are seeking to expand our team of invigilators, who work with us on a casual contract basis to support the Examinations Office in the running of internal and external examinations.

For more information and how to apply, see the vacancies page on our website:
<http://www.ansford.org.uk/vacancies>

Ansford Academy, Wootton Bassett Lane, Castle Cary, Somerset, BA7 7JH
Tel: 01963 350895
Email: mailbox@ansford.net

For further information on vacancies please click on the link below.

<https://www.ansford.org.uk/vacancies>