



PLATANOS COLLEGE

An outstanding school for  
pupils of all abilities

# Newsletter

October 2017

## ATTITUDE DETERMINES ALTITUDE

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

We are very pleased that we have had a very good start to the new academic year. We continue to have an unshakeable belief and very high expectations for every pupil to achieve exceptional outcomes throughout the year at Platanos College.

### DELIVERING THE CURRICULUM: AN UPDATE

Our status as an outstanding school has been celebrated with our position in the top 10% nationally for pupil progress. Ofsted said in 2014 that, *"The excellent range of subjects strongly promotes and sustains students' academic achievement, preparing them extremely well for life in modern Britain."*

The curriculum has always been flexible to meet the needs of our pupils and, as a result, we continue to celebrate outstanding outcomes. This academic year we have been changing the way pupils learn by looking at what pupils need to know and equip them with the skills at Key Stage 3, to best prepare them for Key Stage 4.

It is our intention to work with Key Stage 3 pupils who need additional support with key topics in core subject areas. We are equally focused on extending our most able pupils through our **Centres of Excellence**. These classes will run after school from 3.15 pm – 4.15 pm.

We pay greater attention to the learning outcomes of pupils in Key Stage 3 because we are aware of the impact it has when they reach Key Stage 4. We understand that at Key Stage 3 the expectations have to replicate those at Key Stage 4 and the demands of the new curriculum mean that Key Stage 3 pupils have more to learn.

Our curriculum is rich because it enables every pupil across the school to succeed in a range of subjects best suited to their ability. We cater for the academic skills of our pupils and this year we have placed even greater attention to the social aspect of our curriculum.

Personal, Social, Health and Religious Education (PSHRE) has now been linked to modules which can be accredited. This means that pupils can be awarded for the skill set they are developing. We believe that by highlighting the skills the pupils are learning and developing we can mirror the GCSE awards.



The Physical Education department have a range of extra-curricular activities. They have started to accredit the skills of specific pupils who show a keen interest in sport. This means that pupils can receive awards for the skills they develop, for example football coaching.

We believe in educating the whole child. We are acutely aware of the demanding nature of the GCSE and it is our intention to provide a supportive environment for the pupils to develop their levels of resilience and perseverance. We have to ensure we adopt a 'teach and test' model in the classroom which provides swift and precise feedback for our pupils on specific aspects of their work and what they need to do to improve.

These demands have meant that we have had to address aspects of the curriculum, to provide smaller group teaching aspects for specific pupils.

### Key Stage 4

The curriculum is now harder because of the national demands. In light of the curriculum changes introduced by the government, and the demands of the new 9-1 GCSE, the school has had to make some necessary changes to the way KS4 core subjects is taught this academic year.

There is now an increasing need to deliver more subject content, in particular the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. As a result, not only has additional taught time been factored into the timetable, but we have adopted a Master Class teaching model.

There are significant benefits to the Master Class model which include:

- Preparing pupils for their next steps in further education.
- Enhancing independent learning skills.
- Supporting independent revision.
- Focusing on specific study skills.
- More subject content can be covered in greater detail.
- A focus on different areas of pupil need, through small group work sessions.

- Supporting pupils who may be struggling to grasp specific concepts.
- Supporting pupils who could accelerate their learning in specific topic areas.
- A more personalised curriculum for pupils, in line with their specific learning needs.

In addition to the Master Classes we have an additional **intervention and revision programme** after school and every Saturday for both Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. These intervention classes run for different bands at different times. If your child is requested to attend, they must be punctual.

We believe that these changes will support our pupils in achieving outstanding results in their final GCSE examinations.

### Key Stage 3

Platanos College has a dedicated approach to improving our pupils' progress across both key stages. We continually assess our pupils and use the assessment data to inform our planning and additional targeted provision. Our aim is to ensure that your children receive a bespoke education. In Years 7, 8 and 9, there are now subject specific **Academic Excellence sessions** and **Booster Classes** which serve to support and accelerate the learning.

These sessions will:

- Provide a deeper understanding of specific key skills.
- Provide creative ways of problem solving.
- Enhance and develop independent learning.
- Include extension work for topics studied in lessons.



Thank you for your continued support of the school and we look forward to an enriching and exciting academic year.

### Most Able Pupils

Our Most Able pupils continue to be a focus at Platanos College. We have successfully integrated many extension activities for all our Most Able pupils and there are outstanding opportunities for our Most Able pupils to accelerate their own learning.

- The Debating Society.
- The Centres of Excellence classes.

- Extension homework activities.
- Creativity projects.
- External speakers scheduled for after half term across both Key Stages.
- Trips to enhance learning.
- Trips to specific STEM career days.
- Trips to the theatre.

After half term, we will also issue every Most Able pupil with an **Individual Challenge Plan (ICP)**, setting specific targets for our Most Able pupils for the core subjects. Pupils can use these within lessons to support their learning; the teacher can also use these targets to provide carefully focused tasks which will enable pupils to achieve these targets.

## OUTSTANDING BEHAVIOUR EACH AND EVERY DAY

Underpinning the acceleration of pupils' learning is our approach to behaviour. We have enjoyed a very positive start to the school year and we are exceptionally proud of the overwhelming majority of our pupils who are following the school Code of Conduct.

Praise is vital. We ensure that our pupils are rewarded consistently and teachers treat pupils fairly and with respect.

There are high expectations across the school which is reflected by the many pupils who have achieved a high level of positive behaviour points for their hard work and attitude to learning.

Through our **Rewards and Sanctions** system pupils are recognised for their behaviour and achievements. However, when pupils fail to follow the school rules, they are also issued with appropriate sanctions.

We have seen the following high levels of positive CHABOP points since the start of term.

**Congratulations to the following pupils who have achieved over 50 merits.**



NAME	YEAR GROUP	POINTS
Aryanna Jahanbani	7	64
Dennis Lopez Garcia	7	64
Iyannah Birbal	7	64
Jaiden Adonteng	7	63
Louise Jones	7	62
Shantara Williams	8	164
Tassnim Abdessalem	8	164
Nevaeh Gordon	8	144
Joao Quintal	9	58
Leo To	9	54
Keiron Mignott	9	51

We will continue with our **'Back to Basics'** model and continue to promote good behaviour across the school. The new behaviour systems that were introduced last academic year will be part of our focus this academic year.

## BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

We expect all our pupils to uphold high standards of behaviour both in school and outside of school. We teach our pupils that when conducting themselves in public they should do so with respect.

Our pupils must understand that they belong to the Platanos community and they act as ambassadors when they are in public places. Any anti-social behaviour will therefore not be tolerated. Most importantly, any pupil who is found to be exhibiting anti-social behaviour will have images of their behaviour sent home along with a letter, outlining what they have done.

Pupils are also encouraged to behave in a way which supports the Health and Safety of others at all times including when leaving the school at the end of each day. We have a dispersal system which limits the number of pupils exiting the building at one time. This is to ensure that the pupils are safe when leaving the building.

Our pupils have been informed of the changes to the end of day dismissal. It is the expectation that all pupils leave the school immediately at the end of the school day, and should do not congregate on the pavement directly outside the school.



This is a Health and Safety matter that can be hazardous to pedestrians and other pupils. For this reason, pupils will be sanctioned with 55 de-merits if they fail to follow the instructions given by staff on gate duty.

We continue to take pride in our pupils and their behaviour both in and outside of school. It is with the continued support of both parents/carers and staff that we are able to appropriately address negative behaviour, and consistently praise those pupils who adhere to the school rules and display outstanding behaviour.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY AT PLATANOS COLLEGE

### Health and Safety checks

Maintaining high standards of health and safety is critical to safeguarding our pupils at Platanos College. In preparation for the new academic year, the school reviewed its health and safety procedures and our annual external safety checks were conducted by specialists during the summer.

Our whole school safety checks, fire risk assessments and fire protection systems are currently up to date and in good working order. Following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower, our school (like other schools across the country) was assessed to ensure that the building was safe. The Department for Education was able to confirm that our buildings were indeed safe and did not have the same cladding that has been found in other buildings.

To ensure that our pupils are familiar with our fire evacuation procedure, our pupils were reminded of the procedure in our recent whole school assembly. We then practised a whole school drill earlier this term. We were pleased that the drill took place successfully and our pupils showed much maturity.

### Judicium School Safety Standards Award 2017-2018

In the summer, our external checks determined that the school has continued to maintain the high standards of health and safety. As a result, we were once again awarded the **Judicium School Safety Standards Award** for 2017-2018.

### Fireworks

Pupils have been reminded that they are not permitted to bring fireworks into school. Pupils risk a permanent exclusion on the grounds of Health and Safety if they bring fireworks into school. Pupils are also reminded, as above, that they continue to represent us whilst outside of school.

### Severe weather conditions

The weather is likely to deteriorate as we approach winter. This is a reminder that, in severe weather conditions, we may close the school as a (very) last resort if it is deemed that pupils and staff face a significant risk of injury or non-attendance.

If the school is to be closed, we will post a notice on the school website ([www.platanoscollege.com](http://www.platanoscollege.com)) and send a standard text message to all parents/carers before pupils arrive at the start of the school day.

If the weather conditions deteriorate during the school day, we will inform all parents/carers of the situation by text message and via our website.

## SAFEGUARDING AT PLATANOS COLLEGE

At Platanos College, we are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of our pupils. Our **Designated Senior Person for Child Protection** is **Ms T. Williams**.

The dedicated Safeguarding contact email for pupils and parents/carers to raise any safeguarding concerns is [safeguarding@platanoscollege.com](mailto:safeguarding@platanoscollege.com).

There are also pupils in each tutor group who are fully trained as **Anti-Bullying Champions** and they meet regularly to discuss any issues that may arise.

The dedicated anti-bullying email address for pupils and parents/carers to raise any issues about bullying is [abc@platanoscollege.com](mailto:abc@platanoscollege.com).

## SHOW MY HOMEWORK

### ***What is 'Show My Homework'?***

Show My Homework is an online tool to record and monitor pupils' homework. The school has introduced this online system in order to continue to maximise pupils' learning.

This tool allows staff, pupils, parents and carers to see the homework that has been set for pupils on a regular basis.

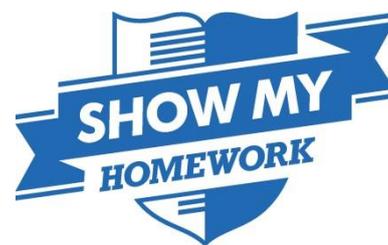
**Parents and carers will be able to access the online system on a computer, mobile phone app or tablet device and receive notifications before homework deadlines if they wish.**

This allows parents/carers to gain an up-to-date insight into their children's homework so that they can better support the pupils.

Parents and carers can log in to the online system via the following link:

<https://www.showmyhomework.co.uk/login>

Login details (linked to your child's homework calendar) were previously sent to all parents and carers. If parents/carers have any further questions regarding the new online tool, please contact the main office via email or telephone.



## KEY DATES

<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>	Educational trips to enhance learning (Years 7–10)
<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>	Half-term holiday
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>	All pupils return to school
<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>	Year 10 Formal Examination Week
<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>	Anti-Bullying Week
<b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>	Year 9 Formal Examination Week
<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017</b>	Year 8 Formal Examination Week
<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>	Year 10 Parents' Evening
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017</b>	KS3 Celebrating the Learning Journey through Creativity (4.00 pm – 5.30 pm)
<b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017</b>	Academic Review Day (Key Stage 3)
<b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017</b>	School Concert – School ends at 2.00 pm
<b>Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017</b>	CHABOP Day / Christmas Fair LAST DAY OF TERM – School ends at 12.00 pm
<b>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018</b>	New term starts for all pupils