



Friday 18th February 2022

Dear Families,

As this half term comes to a close, we should reflect that although this has been quite a challenging period for staff and student absence, we have plenty still to celebrate. For example, it was fantastic to see so many of you on site during the three recent parents' evenings and thank you for the really positive feedback, we know how much you value in-person meetings and look forward to these continuing through the rest of the year.

We are incredibly proud of how our students continue to develop and support each other, both in their studies and with each other's wellbeing. It has been wonderful to see our iLife programme develop too, with students engaging in activities beyond the traditional. I had the pleasure of seeing some lovely moments where students were relaxing over crochet, learning DIY skills and developing their own ideas for charitable fundraising. We have also noticed how students are increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning, having really constructive conversation with their teachers about how to improve.

It is also heart-warming to see our Outdoor education experiences blossoming again as restrictions are lifted, with a very successful round of Ten Tours training undertaken in some quite adverse weather conditions – well done to all the students who participated and thank you to the staff and volunteers who make this happen.

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Isca is a Reading School

We have had a really successful start to 2022, with our Anthology Plus groups going from strength to strength, as well as our tutor reading programme is yielding terrific results with the average reading of every year group continuously improving. As a reading school, we remain committed to enabling all students to develop their reading skills so that they can better access the curriculum and not only read more confidently but more importantly for pleasure too.

Sports-Mad at Isca

Congratulations to Isca's [Year 7 footballers](#) who beat St James 5-0 in a very competitive contest. Special mentions go to early goal-scorers Tyler Wilson-Carpenter and Harry Vayle and for great finishes from Charlie Oram and Alfie Taylor. Also worthy of a mention for a fantastic debut performance is Will Rozier in goal who commanded the back three and demonstrated some cat-like reflexes to keep a clean sheet for our team!

Our Year 7 and 8 Netballers also did Isca proud with Year 7 working hard in defence and attack to win all of their games in their first tournament! Year 8's showed great determination against some tough teams finishing 3rd.

Year 11 GCSE PE students: the PE team want you to know how impressed they are with your efforts this term, working hard to develop your skills and knowledge and for performing your practical assessments as part of the final GCSE grade. Well done.

Performing Arts



Dance Show: We filmed the performances on the 10th of February and had so much fun with the costumes, lighting and amazing dance moves! The final video of the performance will be released on the 4th of March on our YouTube channel (Isca Exeter), so please settle down with your popcorn and enjoy the return of our excellent Isca Dance show!

Matilda: Rehearsals for the show are going really well and we are looking forward to sharing our hard work with you. Members of the cast will be needed until 5pm for all rehearsals for the next half term and there are two Sunday rehearsals on the 20th March and the 3rd April too.

The show will be performed in the school hall on the **5th, 6th and 7th of April** – so please look out for announcements on how to get your tickets!

Can you help? We are in need of a seriously large amount of books for props and set design. If you have any books, magazines, newspapers or other reading material that you no longer need, please can you drop it off to reception for Miss Lihou or to her directly via your child.

Other Highlights

Riddler in Residence! Our English Team are thrilled to be working in partnership with Exeter Cathedral on their first ever Riddler in Residence project. A poet, Chris White, has been recruited to work with one of our Year 7 classes to co-create a poetic response (to include performances) linking the 10th century poems and riddles of The Exeter Book with contemporary verse.

Apprenticeship Expo: Year 10 students taking part in *National Apprenticeship Week* earlier this month should be very proud of themselves having truly impressed employers with their mature attitudes and level of questioning. A few students even took it upon themselves to organise work experience placements, with one student making a positive impression with GWR which bodes well for his future apprenticeship application.

Cross Country County Championships: Two of our students Gustaw Banaszek and Tom Maynard, were selected to participate in the southwest cross country finals. They did incredibly well in this competitive event and making it to the final is a real achievement for them both.

Children's Mental Health Week: Was embraced and celebrated at Isca with wellbeing activities for the children including mindful colouring and mindful breathing as well as decorating the reception and main atrium areas. We are so proud of our students for taking part.

Year 8 Writers: Eight of our students from Year 8 have been selected to have their writing published for the Young Writer's Association 'Twisted Tales' competition! Congratulations to Nicole Knutton, Jake Stone, Alex Boyd, Clemmie Steinmetzer, Isobel Wright, Scarlett Calitri-Venables, Clara Oxer and Daisy Preston.



Inspiring Girls: Five students are lucky enough to have been chosen to participate in the Inspiring Girls programme this term. Conceived by Sarah Abrahams, Senior Lead at M&S Bank and local resident, the programme has been taking place in most of our schools across the city and surrounding areas, following a successful pilot last year. With a focus on raising aspirations, the girls receive mentoring sessions from Exeter-based business women, and this includes an Articulatory Workshop designed to raise their confidence.

CoachBright: We also have more than 40 students in Years 9 and 10 participating in the CoachBright Mentoring programme, as part of the National Tutoring Programme. Students attended two launch events at Exeter University earlier this week, and will commence mentoring sessions with students from Exeter University after the half term break. The aim of this programme is to improve skills and understanding in Maths, English and Science, as well as taking a closer look at higher education and future career paths, as well as building confidence.

Useful Updates

Canteen: Online Payments Update

We are continuing to work hard with SCOPay to enable online payments for our student's canteen accounts. As soon as this is available we will let you know. In the meantime, accounts can be credited in cash or by cheque, payable to Aspens. We apologise that this is taking such a long time to resolve.

Safety around the School Site

If you are collecting your child from school at the end of the day, please be mindful of safety. In line with the changes in the Highway Code, priority will always be given to pedestrians and cyclists on site and staff will continue to manage the exit from the school site to uphold this.

We aim to drastically reduce congestion in Earl Richards Road South, which is causing problems for the residents. Therefore, can we please ask that you are mindful of our neighbours and the safety of everyone when using this road.

Homework

Homework will continue as normal and students will begin 'Week 8' upon our return after half-term. Thank you for your ongoing help and support for your child in completing this, we really appreciate it and it is having an impact on their progress and learning in lessons.

Assessment Week

Students have sat their mid-cycle assessments over the last few weeks and we have been delighted with their positive attitude and the progress so many are making. Towards the end of the forthcoming half-term in weeks 10 and 11, students will sit their end of cycle assessments. This has previously taken place in one week but will be spread across two following some student feedback. We will produce an assessment schedule for each year group, which we will give to students and send home in week 10 so that you can see what assessments they have and when. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at all.



Year 11

Our second mock examination series will be held between the 10th March – 25th March. Students will be issued with a 'statement of entry' (examination timetable) the week before and students in receipt of EAA (Exam Access Arrangements) will receive an additional bespoke programme, detailing rooms and times. Details of all examinations can be found on our website <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/school-life/exams/>

We are aware that students may be anxious about organising their revision, so in order to support them, their teachers are providing them with 'guided revision' as part of the adapted homework programme as a result of student feedback. Initial feedback from subject teachers has been extremely positive and we are really pleased with how our year 11 students are working and responding to feedback from their teachers. Please do contact their teachers directly (A list is available here <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/about-us/staff-list/>) if you would like specific details or further support.

I would like to close by saying thank you for your continued support and feedback. We are always seeking to improve the experience for our students and therefore your feedback is always welcome. We hope you and your family have a safe and restful break.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aimee Mitchell', is located below the closing text.

Aimee Mitchell

Headteacher