

Senior Girls

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**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

August 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians

I sincerely hope that you are enjoying your summer break with your daughter/s. Last week I managed to catch the four Year 13 girls putting on 'A Payment Unkind' at the Edinburgh Fringe. It was a directing debut for Lucy Heyes who ably oversaw Charlotte Hulme, Alexandra Turnbull and Alice Martin to produce a sterling performance on the first night. Ms Emma Gregson-Burt and Miss Leanne Tumilty should be commended for their support of the girls.

Before the start of the new academic year, I would like to bring some aspects of school life to your attention.

Public Examination Results

The last two weeks have seen girls rewarded for all their efforts on the public examination front. Our A level results saw a higher number of the top grades being awarded to the girls which has bucked the national trend as follows:

Grade	% 2019	% 2018	% 2017
A*	8.99	6.67	6.83
A* - A	37.64	32.82	34.15
A* - B	66.85	65.13	66.83
A* - C	82.02	84.10	83.90

I would particularly like to mention Ruby Wu who should be congratulated upon an impressive set of results: A*A*A*AA. She has accepted a place to read Maths at Warwick. Four girls have taken up their places at Oxbridge: Eira Murphy (A*A*A* English at Oxford), Chloe Jones (AAB Music at Oxford), Ellie Nagy (A*A*A Human, Social and Political Sciences at Cambridge) and Cecilia Power (A*AA Geography at Cambridge). Again, I would like to extend our congratulations to all these girls.

A total of 30 girls achieved their first choice university out of the cohort. All the girls who wanted university places have gained them and it is pleasing to see that the girls are going on to study a wide range of courses. Angelina Dorlin-Barlow won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music to read Voice, two girls are going to read Medicine and six girls will read other medically related courses such as Physiotherapy and Pharmacy, two to read Nutrition and three are going to study Engineering. Grace O'Malley did exceptionally well to win a place to read Natural Sciences at Bath University. Law at Liverpool remains a popular choice and six girls obtained their required grades to accept places on their chosen courses in this field. It is good to note that three girls are going off to read MFL related courses at university given the declining numbers of students opting to study this area of the curriculum at university. For all those girls who are now deliberating about whether to take on an EPQ next year, this year's results were excellent and have helped to secure places for girls who missed a grade for their chosen universities.

The 2019 results in the GCSE qualification are summarised as follows:

New Grades	Old Grades	2019
		Cumulative %
9	A*	12.71
8		28.60
7	A	52.52
6	B	76.82
5	Low B/High C	90.65
4	C	97.57

I am delighted to inform you that two girls out of 837 nationally, Melissa Hennessy and Lucinda Barton, achieved nine grade 9s and Molly Dean achieved eight grade 9s and one grade 8. They should all be commended for their efforts.

Staff Update

Leavers from the current staff:

The end of the academic year has seen a number of staff leave MTGS.

Mrs Barbara Jones is retiring from MTGS having joined Merchants' in January 1987, one term short of 33 years ago. She was appointed as the Head of Home Economics and then subsequently went on to take on a number of pastoral leadership roles to finish as the Head of Lower School and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Her success and popularity with both staff and pupils speaks for itself and I am sure you will all join me in wishing her all the best in the next phase of her life. Mrs Emily Tickle is leaving the Maths Department to take up

the role of being a full-time mum; however, she will be maintaining her contact with us by continuing to help the department out during the examination season and on Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Mrs Laura Syms leaves the Chemistry Department and her role as Assistant Head of Sixth Form to take up a job at Dauntsey's School as Head of Chemistry and Mr Martin McWatt has left Merchant Taylors for personal reasons. Mr Stephen Newlove is leaving us as the Director of Music and Mrs Anita Barry is leaving as the school's librarian and archivist.

Changes to the roles of existing staff:

Many of the following internal and external appointments have been made in light of the feedback you gave me as part of the Parents' Survey you completed last summer, from meetings I have had with a number of you over the course of the last year as well as the feedback received through pupils' surveys. As such, I have restructured the Senior Management Team, reviewed our pastoral provision as I am very aware that parents have expressed concerns on this front particularly in relation to bullying and I have put in place new structures to help raise academic attainment and the quality of teaching and learning which takes place in the classroom.

Mr Francis Lawell will be taking up the new post of Director of Pupil Development and Progress to ensure that there is more rigorous oversight of the progress each pupil is making to enable them to fulfil their potential and more. Working in consultation with the Deputy Head, Learning and Innovation and Heads of Section, he will direct and monitor the work of curriculum leaders in their use of assessment, reporting and recording to raise standards of achievement. He will also direct and monitor regular half-termly monitoring of pupil progress against school, subject and individual targets and then ensure that these are communicated to the relevant stakeholders. I hope that this will help to improve the way we track individual progress across the board so that we can engage more effectively with pupils and their parents on the progress that is being made. I have also asked Mr Lawell to take on the post of Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school and become Head of Year 11.

After many successful years in the post of Head of Upper School, Mrs Angela Wadsworth has decided to step down from the Senior Management Team to embark upon a new challenge as she is intending to study for a diploma in Teaching English as an Additional Language, which she will then use within school to support students in this respect. Mrs Wadsworth will, however, continue to teach in the Classics Department.

Mrs Cath Mason has decided to reduce her hours of work and hence to step down as Head of Geography. She has been an excellent custodian of this role. Mrs Rose Hames will now take up the baton, going forward.

Mrs Erica Moore is stepping down as Head of PE to take up the post of Acting Head of Lower School responsible for Years 7 and 8. She has been the Assistant Head of Lower School this year shadowing Mrs Jones as the Head of Lower School and overseeing Year 7.

Mrs Lucy Barker has been appointed as the Head of Girls' Games and will work with our recently appointed Sports' Consultant (see profile below) to oversee the sports provision for girls across MTGS and MTPS.

Mrs Natalie Houghton has been appointed to the post of Head of Well-being and PSHE. She has the remit to raise the well-being profile within school, to develop a well-being programme for everyone within the MTS community and to embed this within the PSHE programme. Together with the Heads of Section and the Counselling team that she will oversee, I hope that this serves to strengthen the pastoral provision within the school overall.

Mrs Lucinda Keen has been appointed to the post of Head of Middle School and will be responsible for Years 9 and 10. She will be assisted within the section by Mrs Jenny Blunt who takes up the post of Assistant Head of Middle School.

Ms Emma Gregson-Burt has been appointed to the post of Head of Drama following the very successful first year within the school to drive the drama curriculum forward.

Mrs Mary Hutchins has been given the remit to introduce Design and Technology into the school and as such will now be the Head of this department. All pupils in Years 7 – 8 will continue to receive instruction in Home Economics as will the Sixth Form who will receive sessions on this as part of their enrichment programme.

Mr Adam Copley has been appointed to the post of Assistant Head of Sixth Form and will work with the new Head of Sixth Form in this capacity.

Following an external Science Review, we have restructured the department with Mrs Jenny Lynch now taking up the post of Second in Science to support Mrs Jacqui Johnson, Head of Science.

Following a review of the music provision across MTS, Mr Chris Harrison has been appointed to the post of Foundation Director of Music across the four schools. He now has the remit to develop and embed a shared vision for excellence in our music provision both academically and through our extra-curricular provision.

New appointments to MTGS:

Senior Management Team

Mr John Snelling joins us from Trinity School, London as Deputy Head, Learning and Innovation. He was formerly Head of Staff Development, a Head of Geography and is a very experienced coach/mentor. His remit will be to lead and manage the teaching and learning within the school in order to provide a positive, secure and happy learning environment for the school community where each girl can be intellectually curious, thrive and flourish. Together with Mrs Belinda Miller, Director of Studies, he will work with the Heads of Department to ensure excellence in the quality of teaching within the School and professional leadership and management of the teaching staff. This will require the effective use of resources within the school, the ability to understand and motivate the different subject department teams while striving to continually improve the quality of teaching and the achievements of the pupils.

Mr Justin Whitton joins us from University College School, London to take up the post of Director of Enrichment and Co-Curricular. He will have the remit to co-ordinate and establish a sustainable framework of character education such that pupils understand how their own involvement in any activities outside the classroom supports their personal growth and development, and reflect regularly, usefully, and effectively on their on-going, respective experiences and life-learning. He will develop and co-ordinate a framework for pupils which helps to develop integral independence of learning through inquiry, critical thinking and develops their research capabilities across MTGS and MTBS. Part of this will be to develop and embed Global Perspectives and Critical thinking within the curriculum. As a former Rhodes Scholar, Oxford, he will also oversee the Oxbridge and Harrison Scholars' Programme for the Sixth Form, Inspire programme for Years 7-11 and the co-curricular programme across the whole school.

Mrs Joanne Mayne, a former pupil of the School, has been appointed to the post of Head of Sixth Form following many years of experience leading pastoral work in this key stage most recently at Ormskirk School. She will also take on the role of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to form part of the safeguarding team for MTGS.

Other:

We have undertaken an external review of the Sports provision and facilities across the four schools and as such we are now in a position to move to the next phase of this process. We have employed Mr Paul Myers as an external consultant who has a wealth of experience in sport in independent schools, both boys' and girls', to help lead and develop, in consultation

with the Directors/Heads of Sports across MTS, a vision for Sports over the next 10 years. He has been Head of Physical Education at RGS, High Wycombe, Director of Sport at Dulwich College, Director of Sport at Sherborne and Director of Sport at Leweston School. One of his projects over the last couple of years was working with Help 4 Heroes to establish, implement and deliver their National Cricket programme.

Following an external review of our SEND provision, I have appointed Mrs Kathryn Howard to the post of Head of Learning Support/SENCO. She is an experienced SENCO who will now work with Mrs Hazel Poole, who is also a qualified SENCO, to lead the Learning Support Department to help inspire confidence in the school's SEND provision and to develop the expertise of staff in relation to children with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

Ms Marie-Claire Gervasoni, also an alumni of the School, has been appointed as a teacher of Music across MTS. She will work closely with Mr Harrison to help deliver the music provision across the foundation.

On a final note, next term I will write to you to ask for volunteers to join a number of parents' forums. I now want to start targeting specific areas of the school's provision and this will form part of the Five-year vision and strategic direction of the school. I hope in the meantime, you can see that your voices are being heard and that changes are afoot. It is a team effort though, and whilst MTGS has many strengths there is a longer game which needs to be played to make the school even more successful. I very much hope that you want to be part of this going forward.

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Tao', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Claire Tao