Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the new school year. I hope you have had an enjoyable summer break and that your daughters are now ready for a year’s successful hard work. Your daughters are looking exceptionally smart in their new school uniform and we thank you for supporting us in this move. We particularly welcome all our new Year 7 and Year 12 students and their families.

We start the year by celebrating the examination successes of our students.

Our Year 13 students performed well, with all students gaining their planned qualification and we exceeded the national average pass rate. There has been an increase in the number of students gaining the highest grades and in the average point score at A level. All students who wished to go on to University have been accepted and we have had a significant increase in the number of students accepted by Russell Group universities. We have also seen an increase in the number of students moving onto high quality apprenticeship programmes. We congratulate them all.

This year the government is using new measures to describe GCSE performance. Our students made exceptional progress, achieving 0.5 in the new progress 8 measure. This means that, on average, our students achieved 1 grade higher than expected in 5 of their subjects. Students continued to be successful in reaching the highest grades with 22% of grades at A or A*. 63% of students gained GCSEs in English and mathematics at grade C or above. We congratulate all our students on their very hard work and success.

There are also a number of administrative matters that we need to bring to your attention at this time.

Entitlement to Free School Meals

If you receive Jobseekers Allowance or Income Support, then your daughter is entitled to have a free meal at lunchtime. It is helpful to us as a school to know who is eligible, even if your daughter does not take advantage of this entitlement. If this does apply to you, please let us have a copy of your letter confirming your Jobseeker’s Allowance or Income Support for our records. Please do contact us if you would like more information.

Photograph Permission

During the year we may wish to photograph or film your daughter and use the photographs or film for promotional purposes. Photographs are often taken for use in displays, the Herald, Parent Newsletters and publication on our school website, as well as for activities for charities, who may use the photos for their publicity purposes. If you do NOT wish your daughter to be photographed or filmed you will need to put this in writing to me. The responsibility for asking people not to include her in photographs will lie with your child if this is the case.

Dates for the School Year

You will shortly receive information summarising all of the dates relevant to your daughter, including Parents’ Consultation Evenings. Please keep it in a safe place. Our first Training Day of the year will be on Friday 25th November and school will be closed to all students on that day. Please also note we finish for the Christmas holidays on Friday 16th December 2016 and return at the normal time on Tuesday 3rd January 2017.

Please refer to the notes attached regarding attendance. A reminder for those students celebrating Eid next week that they are only allowed 1 day off school for the celebration. Any extension of this will be marked as unauthorised and negatively impact on their education.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming years to ensure that Swanshurst continues provides the very best education for your daughters.

Yours sincerely

Debbie James
Headteacher