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Dear Parent,

All too soon it has come to the end of the Michaelmas term and to the last newsletter for 2021. It is timely to reflect on the incredibly tough year that the pupils have had. It is also a time to acknowledge that we know how hard it has been for families too. We have tried to keep learning as positive an experience as possible and get routines back to as near normal as we could. I am convinced our pupils have gone through valuable learning experiences along the way and become more resilient and developed a wider skill set for working. They have also had to get used to being with each other again.

The Christmas break is a welcome rest for everyone. However, it is an incredibly long time and we will need to keep children on study habits to some extent so as not to lose the momentum we have gained since lockdown. With this in mind, teachers will set a few short tasks to do. It may be as simple as some reading. Prep diaries are used for recording details, but also the note of it will be on the FROG learning platform. It is not intended to take over the holiday, merely to add some cognitive focus ready for the return in January.

Mrs Waddams, Head of Geography sent praise regarding Year 7 pupils and their work to produce itineraries for a UK Tour. The work had an open-ended focus, which allowed pupils to explore concepts of higher performance in their learning. Some were outstanding and she mentioned Kynan Wheatley-Jones particularly for his professional looking presentation.

The Pantomime was a huge success on Wednesday and it is highly recommended for families to go. The flamboyant 'Dame' character traditionally will hone in on a poor unsuspecting male member of the audience for her over the top advances! Mr Atherton was the focus of her amour this year. The pupils thought this was hilarious. Mr Atherton should be congratulated for his good sense of humour and having the courage to stand up and help the fairies in the quest to save Tinkerbell!

Well done to Joseph Joyce Year 7 and Adam Crompton Year 8 who will be representing the Lower School in the 'On-line Chess Championships'. We will watch their progress with interest and excitement!

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Thursday night saw the traditional 'Lighting of the Christmas Tree'. It was magical for the younger pupils in Lower School. Even though it could only be purely in-house for KS2 pupils it had a lovely atmosphere. Children enjoyed hot chocolate and Christmas treats as they sang carols along with the choir. The two youngest children pushed the switch, this year that honour went to Zander Blackwood and Scarlett Sahota.

Please remember that next Tuesday 7th December, the pupils are taking part in a fun Rudolph Run in support of charity. Sponsor forms have hopefully made it home and all proceeds will go to support Nightingale House.

Lower School will have their Christmas Lunch next Friday. They may also wear a Christmas jumper if they so wish, it simply replaces the College purple jumper. Donations of £1 will support the charity 'Shelter'.

We will encourage children to empty their locker through the week. They will also take home all of their sports kit to be laundered ready for the new term. Girls will play netball and KS2 boys swap to rugby and KS3 boys will have a focus on football even though some Year 7 rugby will take place in the after-class sessions.

Please remember that College finishes at 4.30pm on Friday with the new term starting on Monday 10th January 2022!

May I wish all of our Lower School families peace and happiness over the Christmas break.

Yours sincerely