



24<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been an excellent start to the academic year, and I am grateful for your continued support. The attitude and focus of our students has been brilliant in term one. It is a privilege to see the students so engaged in lessons across our broad curriculum. The learning in lessons, which is our primary focus, has been evident across the school. We have had a number of open events and visitors to the school across this term, and they have all commented on the calm, enthusiastic, and positive environment at Fitzharrys. There has also been a range of events and activities outside of the classroom that embody our school values and have helped students broaden their understanding, skills, and horizons:

### Aspiration

Students have also been involved in a range of activities that enhance their subject understanding and raise their aspirations. A group of year 10 Modern Foreign Language students took part in the OX14 LP Business Language Challenge at Abingdon School, with excellent contributions from all who took part. In Science, our next group of IRIS research students have begun to formulate their research projects for the coming year, whilst one of last year's researchers received a national award at a reception in London for the quality of his project. In other subjects: Maths students have taken part in the Senior Maths Challenge; Music students have received careers advice from Waterbear; and Year 11 Drama students have performed 'Treasure Island' to both friends and family, and all of year 7. Year 10 Art students have visited the Pitt Rivers Museum for a workshop, and Year 13 students have taken part in an Oracy Workshop. Year 11 will be undertaking their mocks in the first week back after half term; we wish them well for their preparation and their exams.

### Opportunity

All of year 7 took part in a series of trips to Warwick Castle to support their learning in History. The students were superb in their attitude and behaviour, with numerous staff at the Castle congratulating them on their manners. Year 7 also took part in our first ever 'Opportunities Fair', where they were able to sign up to different clubs and groups that run in school. It was wonderful to see so many staff, and older students, sharing their enthusiasms. Students from years 9 and 10 met with author Moira Buffini, Eco Club won 'best in show' for their 40kg pumpkin, and our auditions for 'Frozen' saw 10% of the students in the school putting themselves forward for a part.

On Wednesday evening we had our Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award presentations for last year's cohort. They summarised their experiences superbly, and it was great to hear how they had benefited from the award. This year's cohort are now beginning their training, and we look forward to seeing them grow and develop from this fabulous opportunity.

There have been sporting opportunities throughout term 1, with a range of clubs happening each week. These have included badminton, football, cross country, rugby, table tennis, and hockey. Students have taken part in fixtures against other schools, with year 11 footballers losing out in the county cup, our U-16 basketball team winning against another local school, whilst our netballers have been busy with matches against local schools, and in tournaments. Years 7-11 have all done brilliantly in netball, with exceptional performances from year 10 and year 9 who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively, in their age group tournaments.

### Integrity

Open evening was a big event early in the term, and a record number of students volunteered to help showcase Fitzharrys to prospective students and their families. 290 were involved either in guiding or in supporting a subject, this included 76 year 7 students who had only been at the school for three weeks, and were able to talk confidently about their school. Similarly, our year 8 guides for open mornings received rave reviews from the 210 families who visited the school across 4 days. All the students who were involved were a credit to Fitzharrys and can use their volunteering as evidence for their school awards.

Wellbeing has been a key theme for students this term, with our JMF6 Peer Support Leads undergoing training as they work with younger students through our OX14 LP programme. Year 11 students have gone on a stressbusting course to help them manage forthcoming exam stress. The whole school focussed on World

Mental Health Day with postcards sent to peers and staff, and short videos in every lesson to remind students of key strategies to look after their own mental health. Fitzharrys has also been recognised for its good travel plan by Mode Shift Stars, thanks to the pioneering work of our sustainability reps.

### **School Council**

All students have the opportunity to contribute to the Fitzharrys community by becoming a member of the student council. Applications are due by 7<sup>th</sup> November, with details of how to apply have been sent to all students on EPraise. This is chance to help further improve our school and be part of some key decisions. Our sustainability reps are just one example of the many committees who work with staff to improve the school.

### **Wellbeing**

One of the decisions that has come from these groups is the decision to reduce packaging and plastic in school. It has had a big impact in a short period of time, and our new drinks machine has proved popular in term 1. This, alongside our water fountains across the site, means students can access water to top up their bottles at break and lunch. However, too many students do not have, or forget, their water bottles. We know the importance of staying hydrated and would appreciate your support in sending your child to school with this essential item.

This week we had a poorly timed fire alarm, due to a fault within the system that has now been fixed. During period 1 on Monday, when it was raining heavily, students waited calmly and patiently in difficult conditions. It was noticeable how many students did not have a coat with them and were subsequently very wet for the rest of the day. Winter is coming, so it is vital students have a suitable coat for the colder conditions. Over the half term break, further heating work will be going on in school to ensure everything is running correctly.

### **Attendance and safety**

This term our attendance is improved compared to last year, and we are grateful for your support in getting students into school. There is a clear link to attendance and achievement, and last year's GCSE results told a clear picture of how being in school and in lessons directly correlated with high levels of progress in exams. Guidance on our approach to attendance can be found here: [Parent Guides - Fitzharrys School](#)

We know that many students are keen to be in school, and some stay after school for clubs and other events. Recently, we have seen some students staying on site for a prolonged period of time, waiting to be picked up by parents or carers, and arriving earlier than staff in the mornings. We will of course support and facilitate this in exceptional circumstances; however, if they are unsupervised and not in a club/organised event, students should not be waiting on site in this way. We cannot safeguard and supervise them out of school hours. Details on the policy around this can be found in the following location: [Supervision-Policy-Statement-Fitzharrys.pdf](#) Thank you for your support and understanding with this.

### **Term 2**

At the start of term 2 you will receive a curriculum newsletter, outlining what your child will learn, key dates for the terms, and reminders from the pastoral team. There will lots of exciting opportunities throughout November and December, one of which is the careers fair, this will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> December and is followed by a pathways evening between 17.30 and 19.00. Both events provide students and parents with an opportunity to meet with businesses, apprenticeship providers, universities, and employers. Further career updates can be found here: [Careers Newsletters - Fitzharrys School](#)

Other key events in term 2 include the JMF6 open evening, staff panto, and our Christmas Carol Concert. Our FSA are continuing their fabulous work with a new fundraising event selling Christmas Trees. Details have been sent to all parents and carers via email, an order form can be found here at the following link: [🔗 Fitz the Season! Christmas Tree Sale 2025 – Pre-Order Form 🔗](#)

I hope you and your families have a restful half term break and look forward to seeing your child back in school on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November for another successful term.

Yours sincerely,



Will Speke  
Headteacher