

6th May 2022



Dear Families,

In what has been a really positive start to the new term, I wanted to share some important updates with you as we look forward to the Summer. In what has been the most difficult school year for our community I am so proud of the achievements of year 11 and year 13 who have successfully completed their mock exams at the end of last term and look set for some strong outcomes in their most important years.

Whitney Houston & Care for Community



My assembly at the start of term focussed on our objective as a school, to *Love Learning, Care for our Community and Build Bright Futures*. To this end, we looked at the life of Whitney Houston. A strong beautiful black woman who, from the outside looking in, seemed to have all the blessings of a fulfilled life. I spoke to students of her love of learning through her music, the bright future she built for herself from humble beginnings but also the tragedy that was her life. In the end where people do not find love and care in their community, they ultimately suffer from mental health and for Whitney to die alone and die in the midst of her depression was truly a sad end for a troubled soul. It is for this reason that we endeavour to develop the whole child at our school and why our vision means so much to us.

The loss of Damarie Roye



As a school community we have suffered so much in the last few years, whether it be through the illnesses that covid19 brought, the dark times of lockdown and isolation or the death of two of our own students.



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Achieving Forever**

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Through it all, we have persevered, and our school continues to be a thriving, successful academy where young people reach their potential each and every day. Families might have seen that the trial for the murder of Damarie has now come to an end. The man responsible for the murder has been sentenced to a minimum life term of 28 years and the trial brought to light that Damarie was an innocent victim in this terrible tragedy and his only mistake was to befriend a girl whose ex-boyfriend was a jealous and dangerous man. Due to the fact that this case was under investigation, I was very limited in what I could say to families and sadly it is all too common for outsiders to see a young black boy killed from knife crime and assume that there was some gang or drug involvement. The sad fact is that Damarie had his whole life ahead of him, was a funny, kind and talented boy and in no way deserved to be the victim of such a heinous crime. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones and I am proud to tell you that we have renamed our school music studio the Damarie Roye Studio in memory of where he was often the happiest in our school.

Zaian Centre Fun Run – 22nd May

Although there is an ongoing murder investigation to the circumstances that led to the death of Zaian Aimable-Lina, in time you will see how tragic and needless this loss of life was too. I am proud that over the last few months we have done some great work to raise money towards opening the Zaian Centre. From Mr Motivator coming to OASP to workout with students in the park to over 15 South London Schools taking part in an Anti-Knife Crime Tournament in memory of Zaian that was hosted by Crystal Palace.

I am excited to tell families that we have now organised a charity fun run from West Croydon to Ashburton Park for Sunday 22nd May. Participants will receive “I (heart) Croydon” t-shirts as well as #SmileLikeZaian wrist bands and we expect a big turnout. More details of this will be send to you via a flyer, but I do hope students and families as well as our local community can turn out in big numbers to run, walk, jog from West Croydon to Ashburton Park. The event will begin at 10:30am and finish in the park with music and food at around 1.00pm. Please spread the news and please do attend if you are able to.

The Journey of OASP & Our Next Chapter

Since joining the school in 2018 and taking over the headship in 2019 I am so proud of the work we have begun to do at Shirley Park. Our results place us in the top 17% of secondary schools, the top 1% of sixth forms, but importantly there has been a cultural shift in our school in that time and I am proud that we have reduced exclusions in our school by 50% year-on-year. Our attendance continues to be above national average, and there are fewer incidents of disruptive behaviour during the school day now then there ever have been.



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Given the above, I am really excited to tell you about how we are now beginning to plan and prepare for our next phase of improvements at the school. Ms Mintrim and her team have been working tirelessly over the last year on a project that we have named Shirley Park LIFE Curriculum. This will see a huge cultural focus at the school looking specifically at Student Leadership, Student Identity & culture, Student Future Ambitions and Student Enrichment (LIFE). This project will bring with it a huge focus on students taking ownership of the school, it will introduce a rewards system that allows students to thrive in positivity and an enrichment programme that will open the doors of London and beyond our young people.

This year in July we will be launching our first Activities Week for years 7 to 10 where students will be off timetable from Tuesday to Friday and will enjoy a suite of off-site visits, on-site activities and enrichment to nourish their hearts and minds. I look forward to writing to families with more information around this and the LIFE Curriculum launch at the start of next half term.

Finally, as we head into our Summer examination series and the more formal part of the school year for all our students with end of year assessments. I am thankful to you all for your support, through the hard work of our staff and our students I know we will be celebrating the achievements of our young people come the summer holidays.

With love and with hope.

Sincerely,

Mr Chaudhri
Principal, Secondary phase and Sixth Form



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