

Headteacher's letter to parents – September 2024

Dear Families,

I am delighted to welcome your children back to Chestnut Grove Academy at the start of another exciting academic year. I hope that you had a good break over the summer and that your children are looking forward to the challenges of a new term – we certainly are. A special welcome to new families joining us in Year 7, Year 12 and all other year groups.

Exam results

We have been celebrating some fantastic examination results at both GCSE and A-Level, testament to the hard work of students, their families and our staff. We are significantly above the national averages in most areas demonstrating the remarkable progress our students have made.

At GCSE 82% of all entries were graded 4 (standard pass) or above, with 71% graded 5 (strong pass) or above. Overall 65% of students achieved a grade 5 or above in both English and Maths. This is significantly above the national average and is testament to the hard work of staff, students and parents. 40% of all entries were awarded the highest grades 7, 8 and 9 (National average is 25%) with 11% awarded the very highest Grade 9.

At A-Level the success continued with nearly a quarter of grades being awarded at the highest level (A*/A). 50% of all entries were graded A*-B and over three-quarters graded A*-C. The result of all of this hard work is that many of our students were successful in securing places at their university of choice with a record number of students securing places at some of the world's most prestigious institutions. This year a record six students secured a place at Oxbridge and one student is off to study medicine:

- Josie – History at Magdalen College, University of Oxford
- Siofra – Psychology and Philosophy at St Hilda's College, University of Oxford
- Eliza – Civil Engineering at Worcester College, University of Oxford
- Linton – Computer Science at Exeter College, University of Oxford
- Eleni – Modern and Medieval Languages at King's College, University of Cambridge
- Jamilla – English at Homerton College, University of Cambridge
- Suhail – Medicine at St George's, University of London

This is important because it demonstrates that the sky really is the limit with a Chestnut Grove education.

Open Events

We are looking forward to welcoming prospective Year 7 students into the school for our open events this term. The dates for our open events are detailed below:

Thursday 19th September – Open Morning 9am-11am

Thursday 26th September – Open Evening 5pm-8pm

Thursday 10th October – Open Morning 9am-11am

In addition to these open events I would like to remind parents of Year 6 pupils that the deadline for applications for our specialist Art and Language places is this Friday 6th September at midday. Information is available on the website and from our admissions officer, Ian Kemp.

Open Evening – Sixth Form

Chestnut Grove offers its Sixth Formers a unique learning experience in its purpose-built building. We are proud of the high academic standards in the Sixth Form and warmly invite parents of students in Year 11 to attend our open evening on Wednesday 2nd October.

Friends of Chestnut Grove

The Friends of Chestnut Grove Academy (FoCGA) is Chestnut Grove's answer to a Parent Teacher Association. It is open to all parents with children at Chestnut Grove, and also to teachers. FoCGA aims to:

- provide a place for parents to find out more about how the Academy works and to raise questions;
- enable parents to network with each other;
- organise social activities for parents and students;
- support events and activities run by the Academy;
- raise money to fund facilities and trips for students.

You are warmly invited to our first meeting of this academic year on **Tuesday 17th September at 6.30pm** in the school canteen (please use the entrance on Boundaries Road). FoCGA's first event of the year is Bingo and Mingle for Year 7 families in the evening of **Tuesday 17th October** – more details to follow.

If you would like to find out more about FoCGA, please contact Jeremy Hackwell at jmhackwell@gmail.com. You can also follow the FoCGA using their **Facebook** page - **Friends of Chestnut Grove**. Please also look out for our regular postings in the school newsletter.

School meals

At Chestnut Grove, we are fortunate to have three catering facilities for our students to access each day, run by Pabulum. At £2.60, the meal deal, available in the **CANTEEN** is a great way to eat a healthy, nutritious meal at an excellent price. Students in receipt of free school meals are entitled to this deal also.

The **Hearnville POD** serves a grab and go offering, and our **FOOD CUBE** outside the Art Pavilion serves a different selection of street foods every day.

For more information, please visit our school website - <https://www.chestnutgrove.org.uk/parent/canteen-menu>

If you think your child may be eligible for free school meals, please complete the application form using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>. Please note that children who were previously entitled to free school meals in primary school or secondary school would retain their entitlement until the end of secondary school; if this is the case with your child, you do not need to reapply. Crucially, this entitlement also provides children with free educational resources, such as equipment, books, tuition, trips and more, which is why we strongly encourage you to apply.

Cashless Academy

For the safety of students and staff and to reduce costs, cash is not accepted as a payment method. To pay for things such as school dinners, academy trips, music lessons, etc. there will be two methods that can be used:

- Via the internet, using the *ParentPay*, secure payments system,
- In any local convenience store, displaying the *PayPoint* logo.

For details of how to register for ParentPay and Paypoint, please e-mail finance@chestnutgrove.org.uk or call the school office and ask to speak to a member of the finance team.

A reminder about mobile phones

The academy runs a 'no see, no hear' policy on mobile phones which covers the entire site, before, during and after school. If a mobile phone is seen or heard it will be confiscated by a member of staff and returned after 24 hours, when a parent or carer comes to collect it. If a student refuses to hand over a mobile phone, they will be internally excluded for one day and the mobile phone will need to be handed in before the student can return to lessons.

Please support this policy by ensuring that your child does not use their mobile phone on the school site and please refrain from calling or texting them during the school day. If you need to get an urgent message to your child please call the office who will be happy to assist.

Communication

Our website should be your primary source of information about the academy. We also publish a newsletter once a fortnight which provides families with all of the latest news from the academy. This is sent home electronically if we have your e-mail address and is posted on the school website.

You can also follow us on X - @ChestnutGroveA

Contact Details on Arbor

As we start the new academic year it is a good time to check your child's details and details of emergency contact details that we hold are correct. Where possible, we ask for at least two emergency contact details per student.

You can do this via the Arbor App or website <https://login.arbor.sc/>. If you are struggling to get access to Arbor please email:- arbor-support@chestnutgrove.org.uk or if you would like support to update your details please contact the main school office.

Request for term-time holidays

Every day of a child's education is precious and it is for this reason that parents are strongly discouraged from taking holidays or family visits during term-time with their children. A request to take a child out of school to go on holiday during term-time must be made in writing to the Headteacher by e-mailing headspa@chestnutgrove.org.uk. The request will nearly always be refused (resulting in unauthorised absence) unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Term dates for the Autumn Term

- Friday 27th September is professional day – no students on site
- October half-term is from Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November inclusive
- Monday 4th November is professional day – no students on site
- The last day of term is Thursday 19th December when school will close at 12.15pm
- The first day of the Spring term for students is Tuesday 7th January.

The finalised term dates for this academic year are now available on the school website - <https://www.chestnutgrove.org.uk/parent/calendar/term-dates>. Please also note the condensed school days where we close early at 2.20pm either for pupil progress meetings or to facilitate staff training.

Please find attached a summary of other key dates for the Autumn term below.

We wish you and your children a successful start to the new academic year.

Yours faithfully



Christian Kingsley
Headteacher

KEY DATES 2024/2025

Dates for your diary: Autumn term

Date	Event	Year group(s)
12 th September	Year 7 Curriculum Evening	Year 7
19 th September	Open Morning	All students in school as usual
26 th September	Open Evening	
27 th September	Professional Day	No students in school
2 nd October	Sixth Form Open Evening	Year 11
10 th October	Open Morning	All students in school as usual
10 th October	Sixth Form Parent tutor evening	Year 12 & 13
23 rd October	Year 11 Progress Meetings	Year 11
24 th October	Performing Arts Interhouse Showcase	Year 7
4 th November	Professional Day	No students in school
6 th November	Year 7 Progress Meetings	Year 7
12 th November	Higher education day	Year 13
14 th November	Year 8 Progress Meetings	Year 8
12 th December	Presentation evening	All Years (by invitation)
17 th December	Winter concert	All Years

Key assessment dates: Autumn term

Date	Event	Year group(s)
w/c 16 th September	Year 7 Progress Tests	Year 7
w/c 18 th November	Pre public exams	Years 12 & 13
w/c 25 th November (2 weeks)	Mock exams	Year 11