



PLATANOS COLLEGE
An outstanding school for
pupils of all abilities

Newsletter

18th October 2019

Attitude Determines Altitude

Key Dates (ALL TERM DATES FOR THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE)	
End of term	Friday, 18 October 2019
Start of term	Monday, 4 November 2019
Year 10 Formal Examination Week	Monday, 4 November 2019
Year 9 Formal Examination Week	Monday, 11 November 2019

WELCOME

Attitude Determines Altitude.

The start of term has been very busy, but it has been one full of many successes. It is important that we all celebrate these successes together and congratulate one another on our school achievements.

In a short space of time we have seen our year 7 transition well. They continue to grow in confidence as they immerse themselves into the life and soul of Platanos College. While learning is our key focus, we continue to provide pupils with a range of activities to build their independent and wider thinking skills.

Pupils are working hard in lessons, challenging themselves academically, meeting of our expectations and taking part in the wide range of extracurricular and intervention programmes that we deliver.

Our pupils are at centre of all that we do and the Senior Leadership of the school would like to thank all of our pupils for an outstanding start to the school year. We are very proud of you.

OUR MINUTE OF REFLECTION

At Platanos College we are a community. Our minute of reflection unites us all and the theme for our minute of reflection at the start of term was 'community'.

We must be proud of this and look after one another. Just as you are protective over your family, you should be protective of one another in school.

"One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals." – Jean Vanier

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." – Mother Teresa

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." – Coretta Scott King

GCSE RESULTS SUMMER 2019

It is with great pride that we look back at the many wonderful achievements of our outgoing Year 11 pupils. As always, our year 11 pupils

work extremely hard and we were able to celebrate results day over the summer break, 2019.

We wish the Class of 2019 good luck as they start the next phase of their lives. We are very proud of their hard work and achievements and we look forward to hearing about their continued success.

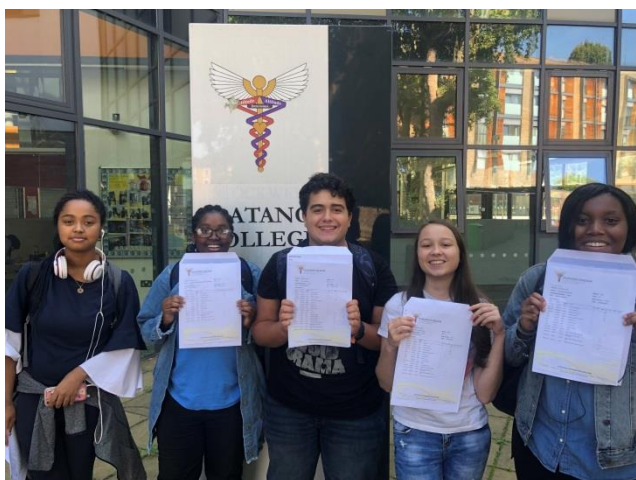


YEAR 7 TRANSITION PROGRAMME

We are so proud of how our new year 7 cohort has settled at the school. They are already embedded within our school community and they have embraced our ethos that Attitude Determines Altitude. We have an unshakeable belief that, with the support of our wonderful teaching and support staff, that they will achieve well. We will make a difference.

Starting at secondary school can be a strange experience. There are so many changes that new year 7s have to get used to:

- Going from being the most senior in the school to being the most junior
- Having to move around a very large building sensibly and not staying in one classroom all day
- Having to be independent in their organisation – remembering what lessons they have on what day and what time
- Remembering their own equipment and books



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- Keeping up with the amount of classwork and homework.
- Getting used to new school rules.
- Having a lot more different teachers to remember.
- Meeting new peers and friends.

Therefore, at Platanos College we take year 6 to 7 transition very seriously. We wish for all pupils that join our school to settle quickly so that they are happy and ready to make outstanding academic progress.

When pupils join in Year 7 some pupils settle quicker than others. Throughout the year transition is very much high on the agenda. Pupils receive workshops on a weekly basis that focus on social, moral, spiritual and cultural guidance.

We start with this transition from the day that a pupil enters the school. In September, Year 7 pupils started school three days before the rest of the school returned from their summer holidays. This allowed our new intake to get used to their new surroundings, new peers and new teachers. It also allowed pupils to get used to new systems and procedures – such as learning new school rules, moving safely around the building and what to do at lunchtime.



We believe this is important to do without the rest of the school as it can be intimidating starting secondary school where year 7 pupils are walking around with 6ft plus year 11 pupils.

Over the three days when year 7 pupils began their time at Platanos College, a bespoke programme was delivered to them. The main focus is on social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum. Although this curriculum is delivered over the academic year, we started the year with a strong focus on:

Being organised which included lessons on: the importance of equipment, how to use a timetable, organising yourself the evening before a new school day, the importance of homework and meeting deadlines and independence.



Being outstanding members of the school community: building a positive and professional relationship with form tutors, communicating with others, dealing effectively with conflict, having manners and dining etiquette.

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Being safe: walking around the building safely and the issue with noise.

Having an identity: getting to know one another, the importance of uniform and the importance and meaning of our school's ethos – Attitude determines Altitude.

Pupils also began their subject specific lessons over these three days.

We do this because we know that the transition from Primary school to Secondary school should not be underestimated. Year 7 pupils starting Secondary School are faced with challenges and we want all of our pupils to quickly feel part of our happy and driven school community.

Mr G. Hobson and Mr W. Bourke

BUILDING CONFIDENCE - TUTOR GROUP 7W LEAD A HEALTHY EATING ASSEMBLY



Congratulations to our year 7 tutor group 7W, who delivered an assembly on Healthy Eating. This assembly was to enable pupils to become more aware of what a 'healthy diet' includes and this was linked to the importance of exercise. 7W did a superb job of presenting and they have been rewarded for their achievement.



IQM CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Platanos College is proud to announce that we have received the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Centre of Excellence. We were assessed and achieved this award in July 2019. The presentation evening afternoon took place in September 2019.



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The IQM assessor was very impressed with Platanos College and commented on our ethos and commitment to inclusion, *“Platanos College is a school at the heart of its community going well beyond the extra mile to identify individual needs in order to provide tailored support for pupils and their families. The school effectively uses the community as a classroom building capacity through external partnerships”*.

Ms A. Henry

YEAR 11 CURRICULUM EVENING

On Monday 23rd September, we welcomed our year 11 parents and carers to our Year 11 Curriculum Information Evening.

At Platanos College we believe that the role parents and carers play in supporting their children's education to be vital. We know that when parents and carers work alongside the school that their children make better progress.

Members of the Wider Senior Leadership team with Directors of Learning presented curriculum information on English, Mathematics, Science, History and Spanish. Key content and skills that will be studied this year, in addition to that which has already been studied, was detailed to parents and carers. Parents and carers were also given advice on how to support their children at home. Some examples given were advising parents and carers to cook with their children to apply mathematical problem solving when using weights and measurements, or discussing the motivation behind news

articles to help conceptualise authorship and reliability in History.

We also want our parents and carers to have a strong understanding of the 1-9 grading system. The Director of Data across the Platanos Trust provided a useful presentation on how to interpret the school report.

Additional curriculum information for all GCSE subjects was also provided to our parents and carers. The Curriculum Information booklet is now available on the school's website.

Mr R. Edwards

FORMAL EXAMINATIONS

At Platanos College we formally examine all pupils in the school three times in an academic year in order to measure their progress. Results from these examinations inform teachers' planning and academic interventions that might need to take place.

The first set of formal examinations for our pupils in the new academic year are as follows:

- Years 7 and 8: week commencing Monday 14th October 2019
- Year 10: week commencing Monday 4th November 2019
- Year 9: week commencing Monday 11th November 2019

Mr W. Bourke

THE PLATANOS ACADEMIA SOCIETY

Pupils who attend Platanos College will be acutely aware that there are multiple opportunities for them to be involved in extracurricular activities.

Two exciting opportunities pupils have to further their own intelligence is through

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participating in The Platanos College 'Academia Society' which started in the spring term of last year.

The society was open to our then, year 7 pupils, who were invited to take part due to their interest in areas of academia outside of what they study within the curriculum.

Members of the 'Academia Society' operate independently of teachers. Pupils are divided into small groups and are given a topic/challenge/task to complete independently or with other members of their group.

A wonderful example of a topic is coding; pupils are given challenges that varied in difficulty, creating characters for a game from scratch, designing the background to an App and many more.

An opportunity to get an insight into what school is like in another country is also continuing this academic year, with a view to making links with pupils in a school in a country in East Africa. Pupils research the education system in Ghana and make comparisons with how different life can be for a teenager in Ghana compared to a teenager in south London!

The 'Academia Society' will be expanding this academic year, we will have a society for year 8 who were involved last year and we will be recruiting year 7 pupils who have a thirst for knowledge and an ambition to find out more about an area of academia that interests them. Not only is this an enjoyable activity to stretch pupils cerebrally; it is also a fantastic addition to any CV; it is never too soon to begin building up evidence to ensure the best possible future career prospects.



'TEAM UP' LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Honing essential skills in literacy and numeracy is as much a priority for pupils at Platanos College as it is for teachers. It is because of our drive for excellence in numeracy and literacy that we have embraced the opportunity to work in partnership with 'Team-Up', a company that works explicitly in accelerating the numeracy and literacy skills of young people.

Key pupils in year 7, year 8 and year 9 have been invited to attend afterschool sessions weekly.

During these sessions, pupils work in small groups of 3 with a tutor from 'Team Up'. The small group setting provides opportunities for pupils to clarify misconceptions, ask questions to further their knowledge and it enables tutors to stretch pupil's to utilise more ambitious skills allow them to make more than expected progress in English and Maths.



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The ever popular 'Debate Mate' is also up and running for the 2019-20 academic year and spaces are filling up fast!

Ms S. O'Connell

THE WRITING ACADEMY LAUNCH

The success of the Writing Academy at Platanos College has been significant. Pupils continue to be inspired to write their own literature, taking inspiration from their own lives and the world around them.

We see the launch of our third year working in partnership with *First Story*.

We are looking forward to the new cohort of year 7 and year 8 showcasing their wonderful talents later on this academic year.

Last year the evening was a beautiful success and copies of the anthology are available to buy from the school. Further details are available on our school website.



THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

At the start of year 7 all pupils are gifted with a novel, this is to symbolise the importance of reading at Platanos College.

Language is powerful. The more comprehensive our language the more power it brings you. By expanding our vocabularies we open doors. Language provides us with freedom – to express our desires and needs.

This year at Platanos College we will be placing greater emphasis than ever before on literacy and in particular *reading for meaning*. This is because reading opens doors – it gives us opportunities.

The more you read, the more opportunities you will provide for yourself. Consider the following facts:

- There is a difference in reading performance equivalent to just over a year's schooling between young people who never read for enjoyment and those who read for up to 30 minutes per day.
- Children who read books often at age 10 and more than once a week at age 16 gain higher results in maths, vocabulary and spelling tests at age 16 than those who read less regularly.
- The frequency of reading for pleasure is linked to vocabulary skills: those who read every day have an advantage over those who do not read as frequently.



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LORD ADONIS VISITS PLATANOS COLLEGE



On Thursday 26th September 2019 the school welcomed Lord Andrew Adonis to Platanos College.

Lord Adonis has been very influential in politics over the past 20 years. He now wishes to become the MP for Vauxhall in order to support and represent the constituents in potentially troubling times.

Lord Adonis had several meetings with pupils, staff, parents and members of The Platanos Trust.

Lord Adonis was extremely impressed with the school, so much so that he invited the pupils and Ms Taybi to visit Parliament and insisted on giving us a tour personally.

We thank all of those who spoke with Lord Adonis about the school and issues in the local area.

As always, our pupils represented the school and your families wonderfully.



YEAR 11 HEAD BOY/GIRL TEAM 2019-2020

Being a Head Boy or Head Girl, is a great honour and something to be very proud of. It is a role which, not only means being a leader and setting an example, but one of great responsibility.

The applicants went through a rigorous process, they had to write an application which was then analysed and evaluated.

They then had an interview with members of the Senior Leadership Team and they were questioned about their commitment to the school ethos and their vision.

After this interview the votes were counted from the year 11 polls and a vote was taken by the Senior Leadership Team.

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It is with great pleasure that we announce the Head Boy and Head Girl of this academic year 2019-2020.

Head Boy of Platanos College 2019-2020: Robert Karapetian

Head Girl of Platanos College 2019-2020: Mia Adeboye

We have every faith in our Head Boy and Head Girl and we wish them every success this academic year. They will represent the school at several prestigious events; the first will be The Worshipful Company of Fuellers, Instillation Dinner.

Contact Details

Please can we remind you that it is extremely important that we have up to date contact information for all parents and carers. If there are any changes to address, parental contact telephone numbers or emails, please let us know by inform the main office as soon as possible or email info@platanoscollege.com

SAFEGUARDING

Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance where pupils' welfare is actively promoted. We continue the work of the Safeguarding Champions and ensure that Safeguarding continues to be at the forefront of all that we do at Platanos College.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

FIREWORKS

Platanos College returns on 4th November 2019, and we know that many families celebrate Guy Fawkes Day on the 5th November. However possession of fireworks is illegal for pupils in our school.

We will not hesitate to involve the police where pupils are found with fireworks. We also permanently exclude pupils who are found with fireworks.

IMPORTANT ONGOING WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

Uniform

- Please ensure that your child has the correct uniform for their return to school. This includes hair cuts which should be of a straight forward style – natural colour without lines or patterns. Lines cut into eyebrows are not allowed. Irrespective of what hair styles are in fashion, we insist that boys' hairstyles are kept to a suitable length. We will inform parents if we deem their hairstyle to be unacceptable.
- Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. Girls are permitted to wear a small stud in the lobe of each ear. No other piercings are permitted.
- Uniform includes: school blazer, school tie in house colours, formal white collar shirt, grey or black trousers (not denim), black or grey skirt for girls, black or grey socks, school shoes (not boots/ canvas shoes/ trainer style shoes).
- For girls who wear a hijab this must be only plain dark blue, plain black, plain white or plain grey.

Equipment

May we also take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that we expect all our pupils to be fully equipped to learn in their lessons.

The following items are absolutely essential for all pupils and will be needed at all times:

- A sensible black or blue school bag
- A set of blue or black pens
- A ruler

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- A pencil and pencil sharpener
- An eraser
- A scientific calculator
- A dictionary
- A reading book

persistently late to school will be at risk of a fixed penalty notice.

Thank you in advance for your continuing support.

We hope you will be able to support us in maintaining a positive learning ethos by encouraging your child to carry all the above equipment to school on a daily basis.

Please also ensure that school planners are checked regularly and signed on a weekly basis.

Many thanks for your continued support on this matter.

Attendance and Punctuality

As we begin a new school year it is important that pupils come to school every day. Having time off school has a direct impact on learning.

Please note that holidays can only be authorised at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher for 'exceptional circumstances' and require 14 days' notice in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be marked as unauthorised and could be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Please ensure that all holidays are taken within the designated school holiday periods. Term dates for the academic year are available on the school website.

School starts at 8.40am. Any pupil who arrives after this time is late.

When pupils arrive late they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of their lesson. Equally, this impacts on pupil achievement and progress regardless of academic ability.

Please continue to encourage your child to attend school on time. Any pupil who is

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