



Headmaster's Letter

18th September 2026

Dear parents/carers and students,

I hope that this letter home finds you all well.

Academic update

Year 13 are now in their final year at school, and year 10 commence their important GCSE courses: I therefore hope that both the year 13 and year 10 information evenings, held virtually on Monday and on Tuesday respectively, were useful to the many parents/carers and students who attended. Students in year 13, are now focussing on their post 18 choices, with many being supported in making their university (UCAS) applications, and others with applications for apprenticeships by example. Today, a group of year 13 students are visiting Oxford University, with a talk being held for them at Lady Margaret Hall - thank you to Ms Parkin (our Oxbridge and competitive university course coordinator) for organising that trip.

Personal development and enrichment

Clubs and societies for years 7-11 are now fully up and running, with all students being notified of what is on offer in terms 1 and 2. I urge everyone to get involved in something each week; alongside rehearsing for the school play, being involved in music and sport by example, there really is something on offer for everyone. The sixth form has its own enrichment opportunities available on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, with all students expected to sign up and get involved in



"We are an outstanding co-educational grammar school which places the child at the heart of all that we do..."



this programme, as part of our EDGE + Award, which is designed to give students an "edge" when applying for universities, competitive degree courses (like Oxbridge or Medicine), apprenticeships, and future employment. The award spans four distinct areas:

- **Scholarship:** Academic extension, research, critical thinking, and super-curricular activities.
- **Employability:** Career-building, mock interviews and work experience
- **Community:** Contributing to the school or local community (such as via our house systems, mentoring younger pupils, or undertaking charity work)
- **Wellbeing:** Sporting and non-sporting enrichment activities to support physical and mental health

Animal Farm rehearsals continue, with the play being staged on the 27th and 28th of November in the main hall. I hope those students who are attending the Year 8 residential have enjoyed that experience away from home - my thanks to my colleagues for giving up their time to enable this trip to go ahead. On Thursday evening, an online briefing session was held for students interested in a wonderful opportunity to travel to Kenya in 2028 as part of a Camps International Expedition, in what will be an incredible experience for those fortunate enough to go. However, lots of fundraising now lies ahead for the participants, led in school by Mr Howell, who I'd like to thank for leading this opportunity for our students.

Sport

Sport features strongly for so many of our students and well done indeed to the year 9 girls' touch rugby team, who made it to the finals of last week's national tournament, and only narrowly lost against Streatham & Clapham High School. This week, given rugby fixtures are largely not allowed due to the hardness of the pitches across the county, the U15A girls' netball team played against local rivals Ribston on Wednesday, winning that fixture, while our U14A team lost their match against Old Swinford Hospital School on Tuesday, despite playing very well indeed. Lots of fixtures have been planned for the forthcoming year, with all fixtures and results posted onto the website <https://www.cryptsport.co.uk/?id=376&desktop=1>

Student achievements

Congratulations indeed to year 13 history student Jayden Campbell, whose essay submission to Trinity College Cambridge's R.A Butler Essay Prize 2026, "Why do democratic governments commonly scapegoat minority groups?" was highly commended by the judges from Trinity College. Reading Jayden's essay was a great privilege for me, and I learned a great deal from it.

On Monday morning, it was a pleasure to welcome Chloe Barnes (who left school in 2016) back to

school, to spend some time in the art department. Chloe is a highly talented practising artist, who won the prestigious Sky Portrait Artist of the Year in 2026. Thank you to Chloe for giving up her time to be with us, and congratulations indeed on her success since leaving school.

My continued best wishes,



Nicholas Dyer
Headmaster



Dates For Your Diary

21 September	Y12 Information Evening – Virtual, 6:00pm
22 September	Y8 Information Evening – Virtual, 6:00pm
22 September	Y7 Heritage Day – 9:00am–1:30pm
25 September	Y7 Team Building Day
6th October	6-7.15pm Y7 Meet the Tutor
8th October	Harry Potter Book Night 3.45pm-6.15pm
9th October	Hello Yellow Mental Health Awareness
13th October	Early Closure for all students 1.15pm
14th October	Open event for Y4 and Y5 students

Award-winning essay for Y13 student

"Jayden Campbell (Y13) entered the RA Butler prize organised by the Department of Politics & International Relations at Trinity College Cambridge. There were over 1000 applications and Jayden achieved a 'commendation', which placed him in the top 50 essays. Jayden's essay on why democratic governments scapegoat minorities was described as showing 'genuine independent research & intellectual curiosity', and showcases excellent critical thinking & hard work. It can be accessed here:

<https://cryptschool.org/news-and-events/latest-news/post/ra-butlers-prize-essay-jayden-campbell/>

New roles: Drama captains!

"This week we were delighted to announce our first ever Drama captains!

Students had to apply for this role and we were overwhelmed with how many fantastic applications we received - the choice was incredibly hard!

Congratulations to our 7 Drama captains - they will be responsible for the KS3 Drama club, supporting the department at open evenings and encouraging/ engaging other students with all of the exciting extras that the department has to offer."



Music Newsletter

"An Exciting Start to the Year in Music!

What an incredibly strong start we have made in the Music Department this term! The department is absolutely buzzing with music-making, with exciting rehearsals already underway, lots of new pupils joining our ensembles, and fantastic GCSE and A Level groups bringing real energy, creativity and ambition to their studies.

It has been particularly wonderful to see so many of our new Year 7 pupils beginning their instrumental journeys, alongside our Year 12 students embracing the opportunities and challenges of A Level Music. Across KS3, we have also launched our diverse and updated curriculum, designed to be ambitious, challenging and inclusive, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to participate, develop their musicianship and experience success.

We are also delighted to continue our work as a Lead School, sharing and developing excellent practice and championing high-quality music education. With ensembles growing, classrooms full of music and so many students getting involved, there is a tremendous sense of momentum in the department!

Instrumental Showcase

Our recent Instrumental Showcase was a fantastic opportunity to inspire our new Year 7 students and introduce them to the huge variety of instrumental opportunities available to them.

We were incredibly proud of the performances from our students across an impressive range of instruments, including piccolo, oboe, bassoon, piano, trombone, violin, marimba, clarinet, bass clarinet and bass guitar. Their confidence, musicianship and enthusiasm really shone through! It was particularly pleasing to see that a number of our Year 7 students have already signed up for instrumental lessons as a result. We look forward to watching their musical journeys develop over the coming months and years.

We are also really excited to launch our Year 7 Brass Project and would love to see as many Year 7 students as possible getting involved! Letters have now been sent out with further information, and we are encouraging pupils to sign up by the end of this week. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn a brass instrument, make music with others and become part of our growing musical community. We hope to see lots of our Year 7s taking up the challenge!

Senior Piano Recital

Our Senior Piano Recital will take place on Thursday 8th October. We are looking forward to showcasing the talents and musicianship of our senior pianists in what promises to be a wonderful evening of music. More details will be announced soon.

Symphony Orchestra – The Greatest Showman

Our Symphony Orchestra have been enjoying a theatrical extravaganza as they rehearse their exciting medley from The Greatest Showman. The energy and enthusiasm in rehearsals have been fantastic, and the piece is already beginning to sound spectacular!

We can't wait to hear them perform it at our Autumn Concert on Tuesday 20th October.

Young Voices at Gloucester Cathedral

Young Voices will soon begin preparations for Teenage Voices at Gloucester Cathedral, taking place on Thursday 19th November. We are really looking forward to getting rehearsals underway and preparing for what promises to be a memorable performance in a spectacular

setting.

Cantores Cryptienses

Our Cantores Cryptienses Choir have begun rehearsing for Mr Handel's Christmas Story in collaboration with Gabrieli Roar, which will take place on Wednesday 25th November at Tewkesbury Abbey. We are the lead school, being joined by another 5 local schools to perform together.

This promises to be another very special musical opportunity for our students. Places are limited, so we strongly advise completing the Google Form as soon as possible to secure a place.

Musical Theatre Club

Musical Theatre Club has restarted with a deep dive into singing for acting, exploring how character, emotion and storytelling can all be developed through song.

This term's chosen piece is This Is Me, giving students plenty of opportunities to explore character and performance while developing their vocal and theatrical skills. It has been fantastic to see students throwing themselves into the sessions with such enthusiasm.

A Department Full of Music

There is already so much happening across Music this term, and we are delighted to see so many students getting involved. From pupils picking up an instrument for the first time to our senior musicians preparing for major performances, the department is alive with creativity, ambition and enthusiasm.

Music is everywhere – and we are only just getting started!



How to create a Unifrog parent account

Unifrog is an online careers and destinations platform that helps students explore their interests, discover different careers and compare future pathways, including university courses, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

By creating a parental account, you can access the same valuable information and resources, helping you to have informed and supportive conversations with your child about their next steps.

Regular use of Unifrog encourages students to research independently, broaden their aspirations, understand the qualifications and skills required for different careers, and make confident, well-informed decisions about their future.

How to Create a Unifrog Parent Account

Parents and carers of current students can create an account without a sign-up code.

*Supporting
brighter
futures
together*

-  Visit **www.unifrog.org/sign-in**
-  Select **“Sign in for the first time”** or **“Create an account”**.
-  **Enter the email address** registered with the school.
-  **Follow the instructions** sent to your email address.
-  **Create a secure password** and complete registration.
-  **Return to the sign-in page** and log in.



Need help?

Check your junk or spam folder first. If your email is not recognised, contact the school's Careers Department.

CyberFirst Gold Accreditation

We are absolutely thrilled to celebrate an incredible achievement: after proudly holding CyberFirst Silver Award status, we have now gone one step further and achieved the highly prestigious Gold Award!

This fantastic recognition reflects the passion, dedication and commitment of our pupils and staff in developing skills and confidence in cybersecurity and the wider digital world. As we celebrate this success, we are also excited to embark on a new chapter as we transition from CyberFirst to TechFirst.

This brings with it a wealth of exciting new opportunities for our pupils to explore emerging technologies, develop cutting-edge digital skills, connect with industry and discover the possibilities of future careers in technology. We can't wait to see where this exciting journey takes us next!



We are excited to transition from CyberFirst to TechFirst, opening the door to even more opportunities for our pupils.



EXPLORE
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DIGITAL SKILLS



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WITH INDUSTRY



DISCOVER
FUTURE CAREERS
IN TECH



INSPIRING TODAY • INNOVATING TOMORROW



Physics opportunity - University of Oxford COMPOS

"University of Oxford STEM outreach for Y10, Y11 and Y12 students in state schools

We have an opportunity for hardworking students who are keen in maths and physics to take up the challenge of COMPOS!

A programme out of the University of Oxford's physics department, COMPOS offers state-school pupils a full bursary to participate in online, super curricula Oxbridge-style tutoring in physics and maths to challenge them beyond the school curriculum and to help them develop their problem-solving skills

The 2026-27 programme year is about to begin.

Step 1 - Register by 24th September: Students must register their interest in the programme through an online form. <https://composuniversityofoxford.my.site.com/forms/>

Step 2 - Complete Entrance Assignments by 1st October: Students must complete both the Maths and Physics Entrance Assignments for their year group for a possible place in the programme. <https://compos.site.ox.ac.uk/assignments>

We're not looking for geniuses—hard working, motivated students who can commit to the programme will benefit the most. COMPOS runs from late October '26 to July '27 for Yrs 10 and 12, and until February half-term '27 for Y11.

Who should apply?

- Students good in maths and physics, with or expecting a mix of 7s, 8s and 9s in their GCSEs
- Students in Y10, 11 or 12 in October 2026
- Students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM due to location, ethnicity, gender or family background

If you have any questions about the programme, please get in touch with Mrs John."



COMPOS
Comprehensive Oxford Maths
and Physics Online School

Free Apprenticeship and Technical Education Webinars

Amazing Apprenticeships is offering three free online information sessions to help families understand the different education, training and employment pathways available to young people.

The upcoming sessions are:

Understanding apprenticeships – Thursday 24 September, 3.30–4.15pm

An introduction to apprenticeships and the rewarding career opportunities they can offer. Find out more and book a place. -

<https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/events/navigate-understanding-apprenticeships/>

Job-search support and opportunities for young people aged 18–24 – Wednesday 7 October, 6.30–7.15pm

Information about job searching, claiming benefits and the support available to young people who are not currently in education, employment or training. Find out more and book a place.

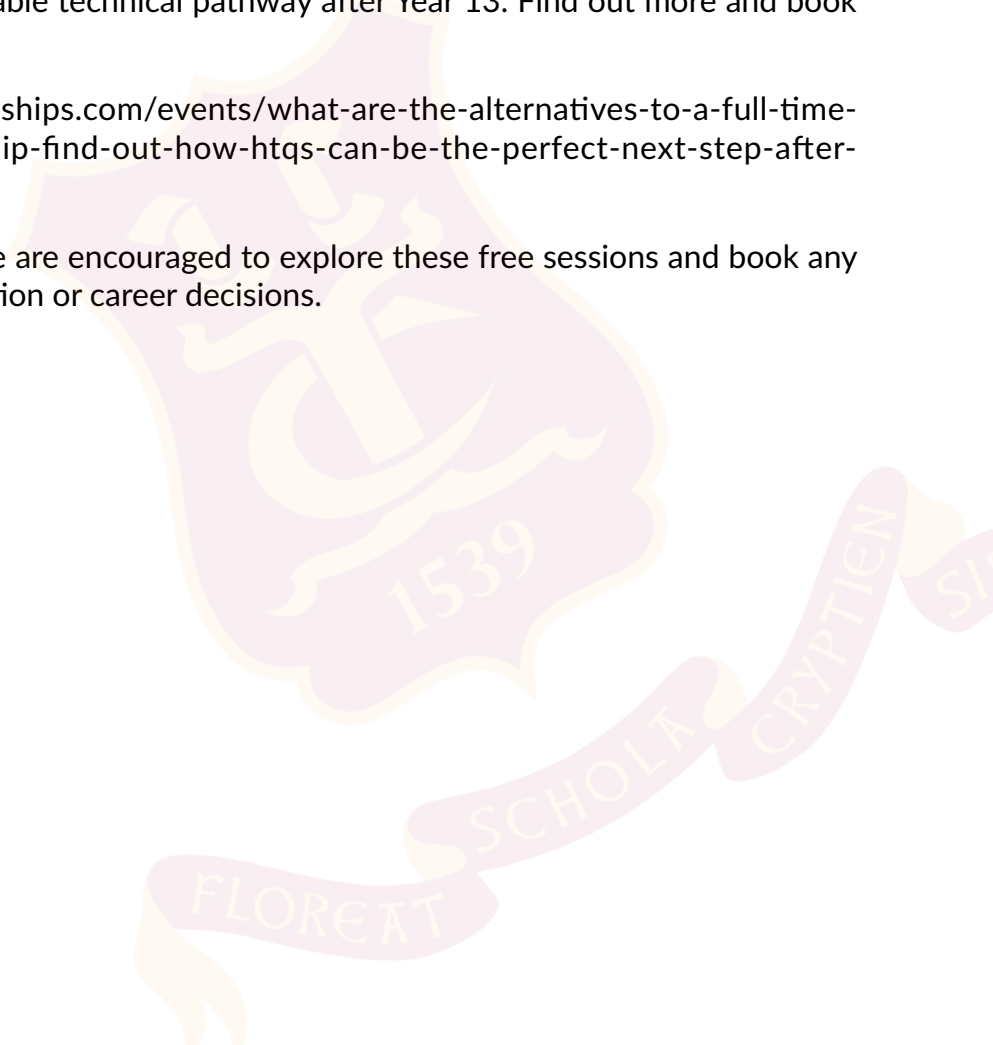
<https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/events/navigate-job-search-support-claiming-benefits-and-opportunities-for-individuals-aged-18-24/>

Alternatives to a full-time degree or degree apprenticeship – Thursday 8 October, 4.00–5.00pm

Discover Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and how these Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications can provide a valuable technical pathway after Year 13. Find out more and book a place.

<https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/events/what-are-the-alternatives-to-a-full-time-degree-or-degree-apprenticeship-find-out-how-htqs-can-be-the-perfect-next-step-after-year-13/>

Parents, carers and young people are encouraged to explore these free sessions and book any that may help with future education or career decisions.



FREE INFORMATION WEBINARS

Apprenticeships & Technical Qualifications

Online sessions for parents, carers and young people



24 September 2026 | 15:30–16:15

Understanding apprenticeships

Practical routes into rewarding careers and how to explore them with confidence.



7 October 2026 | 18:30–19:15

Support for young people aged 18–24

Job searching, benefits and opportunities for those not in education, employment or training.



8 October 2026 | 16:00–17:00

Alternatives to a full-time degree

Discover Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and technical routes after Year 13.



BOOK ONLINE

Visit [Amazing Apprenticeships](#) for details and free booking