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Principal: Jennifer Giovanelli

12th January 2025

Dear all

Happy New Year! We hope you had a restful holiday season. It has been a delight to welcome students back to school this week, even amidst the frosty January weather. **Attendance has been some of the highest we've seen this year**, so thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring your child is here and ready to learn.

Staff Training Days

Monday: Brooke Weston Trust Training Day

We joined colleagues from all secondary schools within the Brooke Weston Trust for a collaborative training day. While the event wasn't hosted at KSA, we were proud to take the lead in shaping the day, with a focus on **inclusion and relational practice**.

This training emphasised the importance of fostering positive relationships and ensuring all students feel valued and supported. **We are delighted to be one of only 12 schools working as a Partner School with *The Difference***, a national charity that collaborates with leaders across the country to promote and develop best practices in inclusion.

Tuesday: KSA-Specific Training

On Tuesday, our staff engaged in school-specific training focused on **executive functions**—a set of mental skills essential for learning and success.

What Are Executive Functions?

Executive functions are a set of mental skills that help us manage ourselves and our resources to achieve goals.

These skills are essential for:

- Planning
- Staying organised
- Regulating emotions
- Adapting to challenges

Everyone uses executive functions daily—whether you're organising your day, managing distractions, or solving problems on the spot.

For children, these skills play a critical role in:

- Learning
- Behaviour
- Relationships

While everyone has strengths and weaknesses in different areas, these skills can be developed and supported over time, especially in the classroom.

The Eight Executive Functions We Focus On At KSA

- **Self-Monitoring** – Be aware of how you're doing right now.
 - **Working Memory** – Remembering important information while you're using it.
 - **Impulse Control** – Think before you act.
 - **Planning and Prioritising** – Set goals and work out how to reach them.
 - **Task Initiation** – Take action to start tasks.
 - **Organisation** – Keep track of your things and your thoughts.
 - **Flexible Thinking** – Adapt to unexpected changes.
 - **Emotional Control** – Manage your emotions.
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Why Are Executive Functions Important?

These skills don't just help in school—they're **life skills**.

- Adults use them every day to juggle responsibilities, navigate relationships, and adapt to the unexpected.
- Children develop these skills over time, but some may need more help and practice in certain areas.

At KSA, **we aim to embed strategies in our teaching that support the development of executive functions**. By helping students strengthen these skills, we're equipping them not only for success in school but also for life beyond the classroom.

Uniform and PE Kit Reminders

Thank you for ensuring that students returned looking smart and ready to learn. **A few reminders:**

- The only hoodies permitted are the **KSA hoodie** or a **plain black hoodie**.
- PE kit should consist of **plain black joggers** with no logos or branding.
- On non-PE days, students should not be wearing joggers or PE hoodies.

We appreciate your support in maintaining high uniform standards.

Upcoming Year 12 and 13 Parents' Evening

Advance notice for parents of Year 12 and 13 students: this will be held on **Thursday 16th January** from **4pm** Miss Davies will share more details shortly.

Building Partnerships with Parents

This week, I also met with one of our KSA parents and a representative from **Lives in the Balance**, an American organisation supporting schools and families to help all children succeed.

We are excited to expand our proactive work with parents and are keen to involve those interested in shaping these initiatives. **Once we finalise the details, we will share more about what this will look like and the time commitment involved.**

In the meantime, if you're an **"early adopter"** and want to get involved, please do reach out—we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. Here's to a productive and successful term ahead!

Mrs Giovanelli