



Dear Parents

It was incredibly moving to watch Monday's news footage of survivors returning to Auschwitz for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. This is likely to be the last such gathering; even very young children at the time of those terrible events will now be in their eighties. We often hear politicians saying that events like the Holocaust must never happen again and that we have a duty to remember. They are right, of course, and I am ever mindful of the important role that schools play in this regard.



The theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is 'Stand Together', encouraging us all to reflect on how the evils of persecution and genocide grow out of division, hatred and indifference in the face of injustice. This has been the message of Mr Worthington's assemblies this week. A group of history and RE students also attended Wirral's own commemoration at New Brighton Pavilion. Many of those students will be visiting Auschwitz in the summer.

Here at Ridgeway, we continually reinforce the importance of respect and of treating others — whoever they may be and wherever they come from — with fairness, dignity and compassion. Our 'No Outsiders' programme, in particular, aims to promote tolerance and respect, and focuses on one central message: *no one is the same, but everyone is equal*.

I have written to all parents this week about our new energy drinks policy and the thinking behind it. [You can see a copy of the letter by clicking on this link](#). As a Pivotal Gold Award school, we are leading the way in how we manage behaviour. Our message is clear: we expect students to be **Ready** to learn, **Respectful** of each other and of the environment, and **Safe** in the manner in which they behave and conduct themselves.

A student who consumes energy drinks during the school day is not ready to learn. As I say in my letter, typical side-effects include poor concentration, hyperactivity, sleep problems, irritability and headaches. In addition, as the caffeine wears off, a 'crash' or period of very low energy often follows. In short, energy drinks are bad for you.

We are therefore following many retailers and sports centres in banning them. With effect from Monday 3 February, energy drinks are not to be seen or consumed anywhere on the school site at any time of the school day — including break and lunchtime. Drinks sold by the school refectory are acceptable as they meet national guidelines from the Department for Education.

I was delighted to see so many students in the main hall last Friday after school [see picture], taking part in Teresa House's FIFA tournament in aid of the Samaritans charity. Well done, in particular, to those who made it through to the final stages. Charity fundraising and awareness raising are an important part of the work of our three houses. Each has a chosen charity: in addition to Teresa's efforts on behalf of Samaritans, King are supporting Claire House and Kolbe are raising money for Cash For Kids.

Next week, we will be welcoming representatives of NCS, who will be working with us for the next six weeks. NCS — National Citizen Service — is a programme that offers 16- and 17-year-olds the chance to get involved in memorable character-building experiences — working with others, developing skills for life and having a great time in the process. Half a million young people have already done NCS since its 2011 launch. It's an amazing opportunity, one that is sure to appeal to many of our students.

Tony Taylor
Headteacher

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Wednesday 5 February: National Football Museum Trip
- Thursday 6 February: MFL PiXL Conferences
- Monday 17 February — Friday 21 February: Half-Term