

29 November 2024



RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are well. As usual on a Friday, I have included a number of updates and reminders, as well as a curriculum spotlight, which this week focusses on the Science Faculty.

Mock Exams

Our Y11 and 12 students have all been completing their mock exams over the past two weeks, and teachers are now marking these. Well done to all students who have completed these: they are challenging weeks that require hard work and resilience.

Christmas Soirée

Our Performing Arts team are holding the annual Christmas Soirée event on Thursday 12 December from 5pm-7pm. Mrs Moran will send out details soon on how to purchase tickets. These will first go on sale to families of performers in the show, then on general release to the rest of the school. We would love to see you there.

Inset day

Please be reminded that school is closed on Friday 6 December as we have a staff inset day. Students should be in school for the rest of the week, and return to school as usual on Monday 9 December.

Christmas Dinner

Last week, I shared that our Christmas Jumper Day for 'Save the Children' will be held on Friday 13 December. I can now also confirm that Christmas dinner will be served on this day too. We look forward to celebrating with all students.

InTouch

This is a further reminder that our InTouch system is being retired at Christmas. Following this, all communication home will only be sent via Class Charts. If you still need your access code, please complete a 'contact us' form on the website.

Nails

Last academic year, the rules were relaxed around nail varnish. We engaged with the student council to listen to student views and decided that students would be able to wear breathable nail polish. Many appreciated this change, but increasingly, some students are wearing gel nails that are excessively long. These can present a health and safety hazard and are not what this rule change was designed to allow.

Nails must be sufficiently short to prevent injury to self and others. If students continue to flout this rule, we will be forced to go back to our original rule of no nail polish at all.

Science Curriculum Spotlight

Our aim for science at Ridgewood is for all our students to develop their scientific literacy. The science curriculum is predominantly a knowledge-based curriculum and it ensures that our students can present



'Prepare for the road ahead'

Respect

Responsibility

Resilience

reasoned explanations around key scientific ideas. We want all of our students to follow a strong academic pathway that enables them to build on prior knowledge and deepen their understanding of scientific processes as they transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, through science pathways at Ridgewood. We want all our students to be able to challenge the scientific ideas that they see in day-to-day life.

All KS3 year groups have covered their Biology content for the year, which will continue to be recalled and embedded during retrieval tasks. Y7 and Y8 are now moving onto Physics, and Y9 onto Chemistry.

Year 7 have started their Ridgewood science journey by learning how living organisms interact and survive within their ecosystem. They then explored the human skeleton and what living things are made of. Year 7 students looked at cells under the microscope and learnt the organelles we find in a typical cell, plus cells that are specialised for their functions. Finally, Year 7 applied their understanding of cells to reproduction. Now Year 7 are moving onto Forces and will be investigating how forces interact to cause different motion, on Earth and other planets.

Year 8 started the year building on their understanding of living organisms and cells from last year by focusing on two vital chemical reactions that occur inside living cells – Respiration and Photosynthesis. Y8 then moved onto the human respiratory and digestive system, followed by genetics. Now Year 8 are moving onto more complex forces than they studied last year, investigating friction, stretching and squashing forces.

Year 9 have been building on their knowledge of cells from Y7 and Y8, extending this knowledge beyond just animal and plant cells by exploring prokaryotic cells like bacteria. Students had the opportunity to grow their own bacterial samples, following safety procedures. Y9 also explored how cells divide and transport. Year 9 are now moving onto their Chemistry topic, where they will recap atoms, elements, compounds and mixtures and apply this to the periodic table, before investigating factors that affect the rate of reaction.

Across year 10 and year 11 all students study towards at least two GCSEs in Combined (Trilogy) Science and some students study separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The KS4 science curriculum represents a broad and varied study of the three scientific disciplines. We believe that there is no better way to learn about science than through practical activities and alongside the 21 'required' practicals, we also offer lots of OTHER opportunities for students to develop their practical skills.

In the Sixth Form, the Science department work tirelessly to offer a large selection of courses so that all students are able to continue their love of science into further education. We offer three A level course lines; A Level Biology, A Level Chemistry & A level Physics. For students who excel at vocational courses, we also currently offer BTEC Applied Science, however this will transition to BTEC Medical Science in September 2025.

Outside of the curriculum, the science department offer KS3 STEM club which enables students to broaden their scientific understanding by taking part in specific, targeted science projects aimed to improve the scientific capital of our students.

If you have any queries about the Science curriculum, please do not hesitate to use the 'contact us' facility on the school website, for the attention of Mr Delany, Curriculum Leader – Science.

I hope you have a great weekend.

Yours faithfully



Andy Bridge
Headteacher