



26 April 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

## MES Speaks Up! Oracy Month - May 2024

After the fantastic engagement from our school community over the last two years, we are delighted to announce that we will be celebrating MES Speaks Up! Oracy Month again this May.

This initiative, designed to promote, celebrate, and showcase oracy across the school, is a key element in our wider 'MES Speaks Up!' strategy to develop students' oracy and communication skills. Research demonstrates strong relationships between oracy, academic attainment, and holistic well-being, in addition to highlighting the importance of excellent communication for access to future destinations and career pathways.

This academic year, we have continued to support students to develop their confidence and ability in public speaking and their use of formal language. We have also begun our exciting work to develop a culture of discussion within our taught curriculum. In the last two half terms alone, we have launched our 'Harkness Discussion' teaching method to Year 12 students – a seminar-style method of learning which supports students' academic independence and engagement – and continued our efforts to ensure oracy is an integral part of all lessons. Our extra-curricular provision has also been strengthened by the re-launch of our KS5 Senior Debating Society and KS3 Junior Debating Society, and we are about to launch a KS4 Mock Trial Club.

During Oracy Month, to celebrate the importance of oracy in the curriculum, teachers will be dedicating at least one lesson with each class they teach in Years 7-10 and 12 to an oracy-based activity linked to the existing curriculum, designed to develop students' confidence in communicating publicly and more formally. In tutor time, students will also be challenged to discuss and debate a 'Question of the Day' from our MES Speaks Up! Communication Calendar with their peers and tutors linked to our school values.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a range of extra-curricular House challenges designed to generate excitement around oracy and encourage students to apply their public speaking skills to topics outside the school curriculum:

| Year Group  | Activity   |
|-------------|--|
| Year 7 & 8  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KS3 Junior Debating Society Oracy Month debate</li> <li>Virtual public speaking competition: 'The world would be a better place if...'</li> </ul>   |
| Year 9 & 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>House Debate: 'Should the UK bring back National Service?'</li> <li>KS4 Mock Trial Club court case</li> </ul>   |
| Year 12     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KS5 Senior Debating Society Oracy Month debate versus local a Sixth Form</li> <li>University of Reading Law Department debate coaching</li> <li>Model United Nations competition</li> </ul> |



More information on how to participate in the debates and public speaking competitions will be posted on the year group and House Google Classroom pages at the start of May.

Please can I ask for your support in encouraging your child to make the most of these exciting opportunities to develop their oracy skills, whether that be through contributing as much as possible to the oracy activities in lessons or by taking part in one of the many extra-curricular activities on offer.

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office [mesoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:mesoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org).

Yours sincerely



Miss C Bateman  
Associate Senior Leader

