

8 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you to introduce you to two exciting projects that will be taking place within the Computer Science department from this Autumn.

Firstly, we are introducing the **iDEA Programme** into our curriculum. iDEA (Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award) is an international award-winning digital skills programme that helps students to develop digital, enterprise and employability skills for free. Through a series of online challenges, students can win career-enhancing badges, unlock new opportunities and, ultimately, gain industry-recognised awards that help them to stand out from the crowd.

The badges will be set as home learning for all of Year 8 this year. The aim will be to complete enough badges to achieve the Bronze Award certificate by the end of the school year. The certificate can be used in a record of achievement and highlighted in future work experience or CV applications. The home learning tasks will follow the timetable provided for Year 8. The Computer Science teachers will keep a track on the progress made and will follow the school policy for home learning throughout.

Students will sign up during their lessons in the first instance to get them going. iDEA is designed to work on all types of device so it will be possible to complete the badges on any device with an internet connection. If you would like to find out more, I attach an FAQ guide with some further detail.

Secondly, many of Year 8 will be taking part in a **National Research Programme** that aims to identify and address concerns around the low uptake of Computer Science at GCSE level amongst girls. Kingsmead will be in the control group for the "Teaching Approach" project, which aims to trial some different teaching approaches in Key Stage 3 and to monitor the impact of these. Nothing will change about our curriculum as we are in the control group, but our responses to the project surveys will allow the team to analyse and compare our approach to those with the new resources. We will also gain access to those new resources on the completion of the research for our future use.

Because our feedback is needed, we will be aiming to survey Year 8 at the beginning and the end of the project (now through to February). We therefore need to know that you are happy for your child to take part.

**Please read the attached parent guide carefully and if you would like to opt out, you must complete the form on the last page of the parent guide and return it to the school by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at the latest marked FAO Mr Smith, Head of Computer Science.**

**CARE**

**ASPIRATION**

**RESPECT**

**DETERMINATION**

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We are looking forward to these exciting developments and I hope that both will enhance our curriculum offering for this year and in the future.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Smith', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr Stuart Smith  
Head of Computer Science