

Our Ref: MLG/ADL/Parent Letter/November 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians

With just a few weeks until Christmas, students in Years 9 and 11 are entering particularly important phases. Mock exams loom for our most senior students while those in Year 9 must begin to think about choices for Key Stage 4. This can be a stressful period – if you are worried about your son/daughter or have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Mock Exams

Year 11 students will begin their mock GCSE exams on Monday 1 December. We are encouraging students to take these exams very seriously – they will provide good practice for the 'real thing' in the summer and the opportunity to learn from mistakes; they will also provide an accurate measure of how well students are progressing. Parents will receive a summary of the results early next term.

Diplomas

Parents of Year 9 students should have received a letter about the new diploma courses. A series of information evenings will be taking place at schools and colleges that will be offering them. Please note the dates and times below (NB some of these have changed – please check that you have the correct time):

Course	Date	Time	Venue
Hair and Beauty	1 December 2008	7pm	Fareham College
Hair and Beauty	3 December 2008	6.30pm	Bridgemary School
Engineering	3 December 2008	7pm	Bridgemary School
Engineering	13 January 2009	6.30pm	Fareham College
Creative and Media	8 December 2008	6.30pm	Brune Park School
Creative and Media	10 December 2008	6.30pm	Portchester School
Creative and Media	11 December 2008	6.30pm	Brookfield School
IT	13 January 2009	6.30pm	Fareham College

Work Talks

We are hoping to improve the provision we make for careers education. As such, we will be holding a series of 'work talks' between January and March – students will hear from representatives of a variety of careers about what they do and why they do it.

We are keen to offer students as wide a variety of speakers as possible and would love to hear from any parent who feels able to spare an hour to contribute to the programme. Your audience would be small (no more than 30) and appreciative.

If you think you might be able to help, please get in touch with Rachael Wintle (r.wintle@crofton.hants.sch.uk), who is co-ordinating the scheme for us.

Governors

I am delighted to welcome Mr Carl Jackson onto our governing body as a Parent Governor. We very much appreciate the support of all our governors – the school simply cannot function without them.

Crofton School Association (CSA)

I am extremely grateful for the help of the kind volunteers of the CSA. They have been helping out at long-established events such as Karaoke Unplugged and are also preparing a series of new ones. They are always in need of additional helpers – If you would like to get involved, do please get in touch – it is a really good way of helping the school and also of getting to know other parents. The Chair of the CSA is Heather Mullen – she can be contacted via csa@crofton.hants.sch.uk.

One of their new projects is a raffle, with the draw to be held at the Christmas Concert in December. They would be very grateful for any offers of prizes and can be contacted via the email address above.

Year 7 Parents' Social

We want to encourage parents to feel fully part of the Crofton community. The change from junior school can be a bit daunting and the new school can seem a bit distant; one's children suddenly have lots of new friends, too. As such, the CSA would like to invite all parents of Year 7 students to a Christmas Social at the school on Wednesday

17 December, beginning at 7pm. This will be an opportunity to enjoy a glass of wine with other new parents – it is purely a social event. There is no charge and we hope to see as many parents there as possible.

Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening

Thank you to all those parents who attended this event – it was great to see so many of you. I am very sorry that a number of teachers were unable to be there – this was a difficult week for our staff team, with rather a lot of illness. It is very frustrating to make an appointment to see a member of staff only to find that they are absent.

I hope that all those parents who asked to be contacted have received their telephone calls. If you have not heard from us, or if you have any outstanding questions, do please get in touch.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resourced Provision

We held our consultation meeting on Thursday 13 November. We welcomed guests from Romsey School (which has a well-established resourced provision), from Baycroft School, from the National and Hampshire Autistic Societies and from the local authority. There were briefing presentations and a chance to ask questions of the panel of experts.

Following the consultation, governors will decide at their meeting on Wednesday 26 November whether to proceed with the development.

Charities Week

Mr Milliken tells me that we are on course to raise more than £6,000 this year – this is a wonderful achievement. This year, the 3 principle charities are MacMillan Cancer (a well-known national charity which supports both research work and individual cancer sufferers), Chernobyl Support (a local group who invite children from Ukraine to come to England for a break) and Playpumps (an international charity working to provide clean water to families in Africa).

Mr Milliken also asked me to remind students (and their parents) of the importance of getting the last few donations in. The presentation of cheques will take place on Thursday 18 December.

On-line behaviour

As you may have heard, we have recently come across 2 examples of unpleasant material relating to the school on the internet. In a series of special assemblies, we have reminded the students of the dangers of 'cyber-bullying' and of our rules regarding photographs. Students must not take photographs at school without permission; they must certainly not upload photographs of other students or staff onto the internet.

We have explained that we will be doing regular checks of YouTube, Facebook, Bebo etc and that anyone found placing offensive material on the web will be punished.

This is a whole new problem for schools and we really want to make our expectations of students clear. Parents can help by sharing our concerns with their children; in addition, if you yourselves come across inappropriate material relating to the school we would very much like to hear about it.

Cycle safety

The majority of our cyclists are now happily equipped with helmets and many of them wear them. However, I am disturbed to see quite a few of them riding with the helmet hanging from the handlebars.

We have had 2 accidents in the last fortnight. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries in either case but I fear that it may only be a matter of time. If your child cycles to school, please continue to remind them about the importance of following the Highway Code and, in particular, encourage them to wear their helmets.

Parking

Parents will have noticed that we now have a yellow hatched area immediately outside Reception. Please **do not** park on this under any circumstances – it is required for emergency access and is also an area much used by pedestrians.

Important forthcoming events

Christmas Concerts – 9 and 10 December, from 7pm
Year 7 Parents' Social – 17 December, from 7pm
End of term – from 12.10pm on 19 December
Start of term – 8.45am on 5 January

Important calendar change

My July letter contained an error regarding dates – there is **no INSET day on 4 April (it is a Saturday)** but there is one on 20 April 2009. Sorry.

End of term arrangements

Spring Term

5 January – 3 April

Half-term: 16 – 20 February

Summer Term

21 April – 22 July 2008

Half-term: 25 – 29 May 2008

INSET days, 2008-9

3 November 2008, 29 and 30 January 2009 and 20 April 2009

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher