

Our ref: ML/AD/Parent Letter/September 2008

September 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome, or welcome back ! I hope that you and your family have enjoyed relaxing and refreshing holidays (in spite of the terrible weather) and that the start of a new school year has not come as too much of a shock.

We have been delighted to welcome all of our new students – the Year 7s seem to have settled in remarkably well and to be thoroughly enjoying their first few days with us. The vast majority always transfer to a new school without any problems, of course – however, if your son or daughter has any difficulties, do please get in touch with their tutor straight away – we are anxious that every single one of them should make a good start.

Several new staff have joined us too. Mr Michelmores is our new Faculty Leader for Maths while Ms Burr has taken over as Faculty Leader for English. Mr Marshall joins us as Head of Year 8, while we also welcome Mr Adjei,

Mr Suffolk and Ms Hartigan (Science), Mr Wood and Mr Sibanda (Maths), Miss Peach and Mr Nepaul (English), Miss Unwin (PE), Mrs Salsbury (ICT), Ms Williams (Reception), Ms Tillotson and Mrs Chilvers (Support). It has also been lovely to welcome Ms Hunt back following her maternity leave.

#### ***Exam results***

We have started the analysis of the GCSE results achieved by students who left us in July 2008. I am really pleased to report that 78% of them achieved at least 5 GCSE passes at grade C or better (up from 73% last year) while 68% achieved at least 5 passes at grade C or better including English and Maths. We are also delighted that every single student achieved at least 1 GCSE pass.

It was lovely to see the students receive their results in August. Whilst we are very proud of what they achieved, we are also aware that, as a school, we can do even better this year. The issues identified by OFSTED and by our own self-evaluation have not gone away – there is still plenty of work to do.

#### ***Important calendar changes***

We are holding an Open Evening for prospective parents on Thursday 25 September. This is a new initiative for us and we want to make it successful and impressive – as such, we will need time to prepare the school. As a result, school will finish early that day, with those students who are not helping out coming home at 12.45pm.

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.

#### ***Access to tutor rooms***

Since I arrived at the school, I have been worried about this issue. We want to encourage students to get some fresh air at breaktimes and we need to ensure that classrooms are clean and tidy for lessons; on the other hand, we want them to have warm, dry places to eat and to socialise with friends from other tutor groups, especially in bad weather. Sadly, there is a shortage of suitable rooms and supervision is more difficult when students are not outside.

This term, we are trying a new arrangement. Students in Years 7 to 9 will have a 'guest-card' system to allow them to spend time with friends in other groups; students in Year 10 and 11 will be allowed to spend break and lunchtimes in any tutor room in their year group.

We really hope that this new system will work. It relies heavily on students taking responsibility for their environment and exercising lots of common sense and self-restraint. I think that if any secondary school can make such a system work, it should be Crofton.

On a related matter, we have vacancies for one or more Lunchtime Supervisors. If you are available between 12.30 and 1.30pm and would like to help out, do please contact Mrs Curtis at the school.

### **Reception**

As you may know, we have made some changes over the holiday period. Most importantly, Reception has been relocated – it is now more conveniently situated in the building nearest the car park. Please report to Reception if you are visiting us; students who need to be collected during the school day will wait there, too. Please do not use the old reception as this is now part of the school's general office.

### **Cycle safety**

As I write this, we have not begun our checks on the use of cycle helmets. However, informal observations at the main gate suggest that the overwhelming majority of students now have helmets – many thanks to all parents who have helped bring this change about. As yet, we have had to confiscate only a handful of cycles – thank you for your support when and if we do.

### **Governors**

We are very grateful to all those of our parents who support the school as Governors. While we currently have a full complement of Parent Governors, we have a vacancy for what is called a 'Partnership Governor'. Parents are eligible to stand for such vacancies and we would be very grateful for any offers of help of this kind.

### **Make-up**

Every school has a different culture. While standards at Crofton are high in many ways, we have noticed that some of our students have been wearing very much more make-up than we would like. Students have been told that this will change from this term and that anyone with obvious make-up will be asked to remove it. Thank you, in advance, for your support in this matter.

### **Special Needs Information Day**

The Parent Partnership Service of Hampshire County Council will be holding an Information Day at Alton College from 10am until 3pm on Saturday 11 October 2008. There will be a variety of workshops, including sessions on dyslexia, emotional literacy and Asperger's Syndrome. There will also be advice available on autism, learning difficulties and parenting issues.

There will be entertainment for youngsters and also a crèche. Further information is available from Elaine King on (01962) 845870 and at [enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk)

### **The school field**

We have been looking for ways to improve the school field, which currently suffers from very poor drainage. With the support of the Crofton Saints Football Club, we have put together a proposal for an artificial pitch. It appears that we may well be eligible for funding by the Football Foundation and also that we may receive the support of one or two local businesses. However, this funding, together with the school's own contribution, will still leave us about £100,000 short. I mention this in case any parents work for companies that might consider supporting the project – it would be a very great shame if we were to miss out on the very generous support of our existing partners because we were unable to find this last piece of funding. Please do get in touch if you can help in any way.

### **School meals**

Please note that payments by cheque for school meals should now be made to Hampshire County Council.

### **Important forthcoming events**

Year 7 Tutor/Parent Meetings – 23 September 2008, 3.30pm

Year 8 Information Evening – 6 November 2008, 7pm

Year 9 Information Evening – 9 October 2008, 7pm

Year 10 Information Evening – 18 September 2008, 7pm

Year 11 Information Evening – 2 October 2008, 7pm

### **Autumn Term**

Half-term: 27–31 October 2008

End of term: 19 December 2008  
29 May 2009

### **Spring Term**

5 January–3 April 2009

Half-term: 16–20 February 2009

### **Summer Term**

21 April – 22 July

Half-term: 25–

***INSET DAYS 2008-9***

10 October 2008

3 November 2008

29 and 30 January 2009

20 April 2009

It is an enjoyable and exciting time of year to be at school – we are all looking forward to the challenges and triumphs that the year will bring. We remain anxious to work closely with all parents – do, please, get in touch at any time.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming  
Headteacher