

Our Ref: MLG/ADL/Parent Letter/April 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians

Headteacher's letter to parents, April 2009

I hope that you and your family have been enjoying the fantastic spring weather and that you are looking forward to some rest and recovery over the Easter weekend. We have had a lovely fortnight at school, with the field open (in March!) and an extended opportunity to enjoy our wonderful grounds.

Public exams

We are about to enter what is arguably the most significant phase of the school year. Students in Year 11 will be beginning their study leave on Wednesday 13 May and sitting their GCSE exams thereafter. With the job market becoming more difficult by the day, it is no exaggeration to say that exam results and qualifications have never been more important. It is vital that students make the most effective use of the short time that remains – I would expect that they will have put together a detailed revision schedule and will be working most days. However, it is also important that they find time to relax and to maintain their emotional well-being – planning and a proper timetable will help here.

I hope that Year 11 students have made parents aware of the Easter revision classes that we are offering on Wednesday and Thursday 8 and 9 April. Some students have received specific invitations but all are welcome. Classes begin at 10am.

While the majority of students find the final preparations for the GCSE exams a little nerve-wracking, most cope with the pressure quite comfortably. However, it is important to acknowledge that this can be a very stressful and difficult time for everyone involved. We are lucky enough to have considerable experience and expertise at the school – if you are at all worried about your son or daughter or have any questions do please get in touch.

Home access

I am delighted to report that we are at last able to make students' progress and attendance data available online. You may remember that I first mentioned this several months ago; we have struggled with a succession of technical problems. However, these have now been successfully overcome and the system is 'live'.

Parents can gain access to the SERCO system where the data is held via our school website. You should have received a letter explaining what to do some time in the last couple of weeks; this letter also invited you to come to school to collect your unique user ID and password from reception. We also asked that you bring proof of your identity (a driving licence or passport, ideally).

We hope that you will find the new facility useful. Over time we expect it to help parents keep track of their children's progress and to reinforce the vital 3-way partnership between parents, students and staff.

Holiday sports activities

We are gradually opening the school and its facilities to other users under the government's 'Extended Services' initiative. After 2 very successful multi-sports weeks for junior school children, we are pleased to be offering a "Multi Sports Easter Fun Week" during the forthcoming holiday. This course includes football, cricket, tennis, rounders and a range of other ball games and is being organised by the firm Elite Soccer. It will run from 14th – 17th April (Tuesday to Friday inclusive) between 10am and 3pm and will cost £40 for the course (or £12 for individual days). There are more details and a booking form on our website (www.croftonschool.co.uk); alternatively you can call (07747) 750590 for more information.

Crofton School Association (CSA)

The CSA held a highly successful Bingo Night earlier this month. 92 tickets were sold and £450 was raised to help support the school; even more importantly, those who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I am deeply grateful to Heather Mullen, Janine Chilvers and all the other kind parents and staff who gave up their time to make it happen.

We really want to develop the sense that the school is a community and that parents and friends are welcome here. Events like the bingo night are invaluable in promoting that philosophy. Do, please, look

out for the publicity for the next CSA event and consider getting involved. Remember, you can contact them at csa@crofton.hants.sch.uk

Traffic safety

Parents need to know that at least 3 of our cycling students have been involved in road accidents in the last fortnight. Fortunately, none was seriously injured; however, in each case the risk was very real. In none of the 3 cases was the cyclist at fault; this was not, unfortunately, enough to protect them.

For me, these incidents highlight once again the overwhelming importance of cycle helmets. Time and again, we are advised EITHER that the cyclist was not wearing one and that injuries are therefore more severe OR that the cyclist escaped more serious injury because they were properly protected. PLEASE discuss this with your son/daughter and join us in insisting that they wear a helmet.

On a related topic, could I politely request that parents refrain from driving onto the school site to deposit or collect students at the beginning and end of the day? We like to encourage students to walk or cycle whenever possible; where a car must feature, we would be very grateful if drivers could use the lay-bys on the main road.

Detentions

As you know, it is unfortunately occasionally necessary for us to detain students after school. For detentions of up to 10 minutes duration, we will not normally give notice; for longer detentions, the member of staff will write a note in the student's planner and ask that they draw their parents' attention to it. We want to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and, when they need to, for the consequences of their actions.

The Paris Marathon

As I write, we are onto the very last phase of 'Team Crofton's' preparations. My kind physio has said reassuringly that I "should be able to run at least some of it" (before adding "mind you, with those feet you really only have one marathon in you" – thanks very much, I thought...) I am delighted to report that colleagues Anderson, Burr, Hillier, Noble, and O'Dowda are in very much better shape and are even now loading up with the extra carbohydrates we will all need.

As you know, we have selected the same charities the students chose for Charities Week. We would like to raise very large additional sums for:

- 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)
- Playpumps (an international charity working to provide clean water to families in Africa)

I am sure that you will agree that these are very worthy causes. We remain very grateful for any donations you and the rest of the family might care to make! Please make cheques payable to 'Crofton School' and send them to the finance office in an envelope marked 'Paris Marathon'.

Summer Term

21 April 2009 – 22 July 2009

Half-term: 25 – 29 May 2009

Year 10 work experience: 4 – 15 May 2009

I hope you enjoy a peaceful and refreshing Easter break.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher