

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

Dear Parents/Guardians

Headteacher's letter to parents - July 2009

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and happy. As we approach the end of another school year, I hope in particular that your son or daughter has enjoyed the year just passed and that they have made the progress you hoped they would make. It has been a pleasure and a privilege for everyone who works at Crofton to support your child this year; it remains a very great honour for me to lead the school.

As I reflect on a first full year in the job, I continue to be amazed at the diverse qualities and talents of our fantastic students. I have seen and heard from amazing artists and animators and acrobats; clever and creative cooks; fabulous photographers and poets and prefects; impressive illustrators and interviewers; marvellous musicians and mentors and mathematicians; wonderful writers; superb young sportsmen and women; dazzling dancers and debaters. I have also enjoyed working every single day alongside charming and right-thinking young citizens – the adults at our school are really very lucky.

I feel that we have made substantial progress on our journey to becoming an outstanding school. I am under no illusions that the job is done – we have a 19 page school improvement plan packed with new ideas and improvements – but I feel very optimistic about the progress we have made.

Kirkland Rowell Survey

I would like to thank all those parents and students who returned their Kirkland Rowell Survey forms earlier in the summer. The results are really helpful in assessing our achievements to date and in helping us to plan school improvement.

We received 614 responses to the student survey – this was a 56.5% response rate. 48% of these reported an overall improvement in the school compared to the previous year, while 21% felt that life at school had got worse. The survey analysis reported that “the survey results reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities”.

We received 352 responses to the parent survey – this was a 32.4% response rate. 29% of these reported an overall improvement since the previous year, while 8% reported deterioration. Against “selected performance criteria”, 82.8% of those parents who responded felt the school was ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (up from 70.9%). Parents rated the various criteria as follows:

- **exceptional** – communication
- **very good** (in descending order) – security, moral values, social health education, community spirit, school facilities, discipline, bullying control, homework levels, caring teachers, student happiness and truancy control
- **good** – developing confidence, exam results, choice of subjects, developing potential, computers, teaching quality, careers advice, resources

Parents made a wide variety of constructive comments. Where there were concerns, these were most commonly related to:

- a) staff absence and excessive use of supply teachers
- b) discipline
- c) marking and homework
- d) bullying control
- e) uniform (not strict enough)
- f) uniform (too strict)

This feedback is most helpful – some of it was expected but some also provided new insights for the leadership team. Many, many thanks to everyone who took the trouble to fill in and return the forms.

Staff

The end of the Summer Term can be a sad time in some ways. We have already said good bye to our Year 11 students; we must also say farewell to a number of staff.

We are very, very sad to be saying goodbye to Mrs Christine Curtis, who will be retiring from the position of Bursar. Chris has given a good part of her working life to Crofton School and its students and she will be deeply missed by everyone who works with her.

Many congratulations are due to Mr Jim Collinson, who is leaving to take charge of the science department at Staunton Park School. We are very sorry to say that he will be joined there by Miss Kelly Lovegrove who has also secured a promoted post. We also say goodbye to Mrs Lesley Corps (ICT), Mrs Elisha Diggie (support), Ms Grainne Hartigan (science), Miss Fiona Kealey (support) and Mrs Lubna Ahmad (ICT); we say a temporary farewell to Mrs Sonia Deering as she starts her maternity leave.

I am very grateful indeed to all these colleagues for their efforts on behalf of the school and its students – I am sure that you will join me in wishing them all the best for the future.

The House System

As I hope you have already heard, we have reactivated and relaunched our house system. We had a wonderful Student Conference earlier this term and students are now grouped into Darwin, Einstein, Franklin and Newton houses for sporting and

competition purposes. We hope that this will encourage students to feel more fully part of the school community and to enjoy participating in a wider range of school events – plans for a revised Sports Day are being finalised as I write.

Crofton School Association

The CSA have nobly continued to support the school this term, providing much-needed refreshments at school events and planning several new fund-raising activities for the Autumn. These will include a welcome party for new Year 7 parents in September; a quiz night on Friday 9th October; a bingo night on Friday 27th November and, in the Spring Term, 2010, a Ladies Night. The aim is to raise £2,500 to support our students' participation in the Global Rock Challenge next year. If you would like to help or just to find out more, please contact Heather Mullen via csa@crofton.hants.sch.uk.

Iceland visit

You may remember from a previous letter that our intrepid geography teachers have organised a school visit to Iceland. The trip will take place from Thursday 22 to Sunday 25 October and participants will get the chance to experience the extraordinary scenery and culture of this unique country. As I write, there are still 6 places available – students of all ages are welcome. I am afraid the visit is not cheap, at £700 – however, if your daughter/son is very keen to go and the cost is a problem, do please contact me. If you would like more information, please contact Mrs Evans (either by telephone or via school@crofton.hants.sch.uk).

Uniform Grants

If your son/daughter is going into year 9 or 10 in September and they are entitled to free school meals, you may not have realised that you can apply for a uniform grant of £61.25. Application forms are available from Reception.

Parking

I am sorry to have to repeat my plea to parents regarding parking. As you know, the school access road becomes very congested, particularly at the beginning and end of the day. **Please** do not bring your car onto the school site unless there is absolutely no alternative; if you do drive into the school, please park considerately and avoid those areas marked with double-yellow lines and/or yellow hatching.

Unwanted mobile phones

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Charity was launched in October 2005. By mid-January 2009, the Air Ambulance had attended over 1,200 incidents, [saving many lives](#).

This Air Ambulance Charity provides a vital service to the two counties yet relies entirely on voluntary donations and needs to raise more than £85,000 every month to succeed, which is almost £3000 every day.

None of us knows when we may need its help. Airborne within three minutes of a 999 call, the Air Ambulance can reach most of its operational area.

We will be supporting the HIOW Air Ambulance by collecting in unwanted mobile phones at the School Office. These can be recycled to raise funds.

A poster showing how much the school has raised will be displayed in the School Office reception area. Further details about the way this charity can be helped can be found at www.hampshireandiowairambulance.org.uk.

Our records

Many thanks to all those parents who keep us up-to-date with changes of address and telephone numbers. We will be issuing our annual data check sheets in September but, in the meantime, if any of your details have changed, we would be very grateful for an update.

Arrangements for the end and start of term

Term finishes on *Wednesday 22 July*. There will be a short tutor period from 1150; students will then be dismissed between 1200 and 1215.

The Autumn Term begins on *Thursday 3 September*. Year 7 students and their prefects should arrive for 1100, while all other students should arrive for 1320. The school day will finish at the usual time of 1510.

Uniform

You may well be buying uniform during the school holidays. There are no changes to the main school uniform rules, but the PE kit has changed slightly – students now have the option of wearing a navy blue t-shirt with the school logo, a fleece (also with logo), a new-style rugby shirt (likewise) and a skirt. All of these items are available from Skoolkit or via the finance office.

2009-10 dates

Autumn Term

Half-term: 26–30 October 2009

End of term: 18 December 2009

Spring Term

4 January–1 April 2010

Half-term: 15–19 February 2010

Summer Term

19 April – 23 July 2010

Half-term: 1–4 June 2010

INSET DAYS 2009-10

2 October 2009

2 November 2009

29 January 2010

19 April 2010
9 July 2010

It remains only for me to wish you and your whole family a highly enjoyable and rewarding summer.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher