

Our ref: MLG/ADL/Headteacher letter/March 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope that you and your family are very well and that those who were able to take time off during half-term feel somewhat refreshed. We are happy to be back and busy – there is a really focused and purposeful atmosphere at the school, with the serious matters of option choices, modular exams and GCSE coursework deadlines very much to the fore.

Years 10 and 11

This is a particularly critical time for students on GCSE courses. With modular exams, controlled assessments, coursework and, of course, the final exam season just a few weeks away in May, the pressure on students in Key Stage 4 is real, continuous and substantial. We have been emphasising the importance of getting the very highest grades possible (and not settling for what can be easily achieved).

Every student is different. Some need to be encouraged to work harder; some need to be guided into working sensibly; some need to be protected from stress or from their own conscientiousness. If you have a son or daughter in Year 10 or 11 and you are worried about them, do PLEASE get in touch – we are keen to help. Also, do please come along to the Year 10 Parents' Consultation (see below) or to the Year 11 Study Skills Evening on Monday 29 March 2010 (more details to follow).

Governors

Following the recent election, I am delighted to welcome Mr Ian Williamson as a new parent governor.

Email to parents

Many of you will receive this letter via email in the next couple of days. We intend to send an e-newsletter out twice per term; as time goes on we hope to include a variety of news and articles about the school. We will also use email to send out occasional reminders about important events.

We still do not have email addresses for everyone. If you would like to benefit from email messages from the school, or if your email address has changed do, please, return the form at the bottom of this letter.

Free School Meals

As you probably know, some children are entitled to receive free school meals. We believe that, even in these difficult economic times, there may be some families who could claim this benefit who do not currently do so. We would very much like to encourage anyone who qualifies for free school meals to claim them.

Free School Meals are available to students whose parents/guardians are in receipt of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Customs) that does not exceed £16,040
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

If you think you may be eligible, please complete and return our simple form with your name, address and National Insurance number, and we'll do the rest.

The forms are available from Reception, or we can send one out to you.

Bingo Night

As you should already have heard, our friends in the Crofton School PTA are organising a Bingo Night on Friday 12 March. I really hope that you will consider coming along -we really want everyone to feel welcome at the school and to feel part of our community. Doors will open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start – there will be light refreshments and a licensed bar – tickets cost just £1.50 per head and tickets are available from the finance office.

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I am really grateful for the support of those kind parents who contribute to the work of the school by supporting the PTA. They are the lovely volunteers who serve refreshments at school events; they are also the noble souls who help raise vital extra funds for us by organising events like the bingo. They are always looking for new helpers and can be contacted via pta@crofton.hants.sch.uk. This is a great way to meet other parents and to get to know the school and its staff better.

“Blue Remembered Hills”

I am delighted to remind you that our school play will take place on *Tuesday and Wednesday 30 and 31 March*. Students will be performing “Blue Remembered Hills” - it is a charming play which captures the apparent carefree life of a group of seven year old children in 1943. It is set in the West Country and follows the antics of the children during one day.

Ms May writes: “We see the children exploring the woods and playing games especially ‘lets pretend’. Never far away is the cruelty of some adults which has impinged on their sub consciousness. The rancour and acrimony that some children can inflict, is explored and exemplified by their behaviour and treatment of each other within the play. Testament to this is the constant struggle between the children for ‘power’ and the seemingly endless taunting of a particular underprivileged child called Donald, culminating in a tragic conclusion.

As a move away from the ‘norm’ we have decided to stage the production in the round, that is the audience sit in a circle around the performance space. This obviously affects and indeed creates design challenges and opportunities regarding the use of a set. This has been resolved by using physical theatre!

The cast and technical crew are drawn from Years 8 through to Year 10. The students involved can not be faulted for their enthusiasm and commitment to doing their best. Personally I think they have enjoyed the opportunity to regress to their unfettered childhood!”

Tickets are available from the finance office in school and cost just £3. We hope very much that you will be able to attend.

REMINDER - “Home Access” - FREE COMPUTERS!

This is a new government scheme intended to make sure that every child in the country has a computer at home with broadband access to the internet.

This item was mentioned in last month’s letter and can be found on our website www.crofton.hants.sch.uk.

If you think you might be eligible for a Home Access grant simply call the Home Access Grant Helpline on (0333 200 1004) to get an application form. Alternatively, the Home Access website for parents is www.homeaccess.org.uk

EXTENDED SERVICES

Thank you to everyone who returned the Extended Services Questionnaire. The winner of the £25 M&S voucher was Mrs Reed, whose children attend Crofton Anne Dale Junior School.

Please check the Extended Services page on the school website for the latest details of events and activities.

Would your child like to take part in an activity but you need help paying for fees and/or equipment?

The **L.E.A.P** Advantage Subsidy is part of the Government’s commitment to extended services in and around schools. The subsidy provides funding to help ensure that out-of-hours activities are accessible to those pupils who would not otherwise be able to afford them. Full details of LEAP funding are available from Anita Sloan Extended Services Co-ordinator, Tel: 01329 664251 ext 6821, Mob: 07500 700068, email asloan@crofton.hants.sch.uk.

Parents’ Consultations

Our next parents’ evening will be for **Year 10** and it will take place on **Thursday 18 March 2010**. I would like to thank all those parents who come to the parents’ evenings and urge everyone to do so – we find that students’ progress is maximised when we can work in close partnership with you. The Year 10 evening is absolutely critical – we need to make sure that you have a clear understanding of the start your children have made and to hear any worries you may have.

The **Year 8** evening follows on **Thursday 22 April 2010** (immediately after the holidays).

Governors kindly conduct a survey of parents’ views about the school during the parents’ evening. These are the results of the Year 9 survey, held on 28 January 2009:

Progress

How satisfied are you with the progress your son/daughter is making?

Very satisfied 21 Quite satisfied 20 Quite dissatisfied 1 Very dissatisfied 2

Teaching, learning and the curriculum

How satisfied are you with the quality of teaching at the school?

Very satisfied 14 Quite satisfied 18 Quite dissatisfied 2 Very dissatisfied 1

How satisfied are you with the quality of the curriculum?

Very satisfied 11 Quite satisfied 20 Quite dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied 0

Care, support and guidance

How satisfied are you with the quality of care and support that your daughter/son receives?

Very satisfied 18 Quite satisfied 14 Quite dissatisfied 1 Very dissatisfied 1

Home school communications

How satisfied are you with the quality and quantity of information you receive from the school?

Very satisfied 21 Quite satisfied 11 Quite dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied 2

This parents' evening

How satisfied are you with the organisation of this parents' evening?

Very satisfied 15 Quite satisfied 14 Quite dissatisfied 3 Very dissatisfied 0

What 3 things do you most like about the school? Things mentioned 4 or more times:

Friendly atmosphere – 13; Attitude of staff – 12; Results – 6; Student support – 5; Quality of Teaching – 4; Communication - 4

What improvements would you most like to see? Things mentioned 2 or more times:

Discipline improved – 5; Timings of parents evening – 5; Homework deadlines to be kept to/regular marking – 3; G&T provision – 3; Smarter students when in uniform - 2

This feedback is important to us and we are very grateful to those parents who provide it.

Important dates

3 March 2010	Year 10 science exams
4, 5, 8, 9 March 2010	Year 10 geography fieldtrips
12 March 2010	PTA Bingo Night
18 March 2010	Year 10 Parents' Consultation
29 March 2010	Year 11 Study Skills Evening
30 and 31 March 2010	"Blue Remembered Hills"
1 April 2010	Term ends (3.10pm)

Summer Term

20 April – 23 July 2010

Half-term: 31 May – 4 June 2010

INSET days, 2009-10

19 April and 9 July 2010

Important date change

The summer concerts will now take place on **30 June and 1 July 2010**, not 29 June as previously advertised.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher

Name of student(s): _____ Tutor group(s): _____

Parents' email address: _____