

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

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and happy.

The term has started really well, with our students well settled and focused. Of course, things were a little complicated by the volcanic dust, but fortunately we have been able to cover for those colleagues who were trapped overseas.

This is an exciting but thought-provoking time of year – the reality of their exams and the imminence of their departure from the school have made a big impression on Year 11 students, while younger folk also have plenty to think about, whether it be work experience, GCSE modules, end-of-Key Stage 3 tests, applications for positions of responsibility or just the prospect of no longer being the youngest!

Year 11s will be going on study leave after Monday 17 May 2010 – Year 11 parents should by now have received a detailed letter about the arrangements for their departure, for revision sessions, exams and results collection. This is my last letter to parents of those students – I would like to repeat that we are very proud of the year group and feel confident on their behalf. For some of you, this summer marks the end of your close association with Crofton School – I very much hope that you will continue to feel that you remain valued members of the Crofton family and that you will stay in touch.

Work experience

As I write, Year 10 students are preparing to go on work experience. This is a highly significant fortnight – we always find that students return wiser and usually that they also become better motivated. Whatever the workplace is, the opportunity to get a taste of adults' working lives is invaluable. If your daughter or son is going on work experience, do please encourage them to reflect carefully on what they see – we want them to strive for the best exam results they can possibly achieve in their remaining year with us and some direct contact with other people's working lives can be a powerful incentive to work hard.

As you can imagine, it is always a challenge to find enough work experience placements. If you are in a position to offer such a placement at your work place, we would love to hear from you – although we organise most of our placements through Portsmouth Education Business Partnership, it is really useful to have a list of extra ones for emergency use. Please email me at school@crofton.hants.sch.uk if you are able to help.

School computers

Students at the school use computers more and more. We already have more than 200 machines available for them and we are developing plans to provide many more, using our newly-installed wireless network. Students benefit enormously from using computers (and the internet) at school, both because of the specific ICT skills they develop and because they make learning more stimulating across all the other subjects.

It is essential that students can use the internet. However, the internet is potentially a dangerous place. We keep our students safe in three main ways:

- a) By teaching them to avoid hazardous sites and behaviour
- b) By protecting the school network with firewalls and equivalent technologies
- c) By detecting any inappropriate material that may slip through

The detection of inappropriate material is done automatically (and with impressive efficiency) by some rather expensive software. This generates instant screenshots of any unsuitable words or images and reports them, along with the user's log-on details, to our technical staff.

I mention this because a couple of students have been deeply embarrassed by being caught out. I would be very grateful if you could remind your son/daughter of the promise they have made not to try to access inappropriate material (and if you could point out that they will certainly be caught if they do).

Shoes

The school uniform guidance states that students must wear plain black shoes without substantial heels. Fashion is a powerful force – a few students have come into school recently with the wrong kinds of shoes.

The most important consideration here is their health and safety. Most of our students work in technology rooms; all of them work in science labs. They must have shoes that will protect them from a dropped chisel or spilt chemicals. They also need shoes which are suitable for walking around our open site on rainy days, when there are puddles on the ground.

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If you are buying new shoes in the near future please bear these points in mind. I will include this request in the late summer edition of the letter, as a pre-holiday reminder!

The Croft and other works

We have had a couple of delays associated with the ground conditions and a problem with a contractor. However, building work is now well under way – we hope and expect that the new facility will be completed by the end of October 2010. We will be welcoming our first ASD students in September in any case – they will work from our existing learning support area until the new building is ready.

During the summer, we will also:

- Refurbish and re-equip 2 ICT rooms
- Complete the commissioning of our state-of-the-art wireless network
- Transfer maths teaching from 2 of the 'mobiles' into refurbished rooms in the main building (using the vacated buildings for administration)
- Install and commission a new CAD/CAM/laser cutter facility in technology
- Improve Reception and the entrance to the school
- Provide additional seating and planting in the (currently) unpleasant area between the science and art buildings

I hardly dare mention it, given how long the saga already seems to have lasted, but the artificial pitch project may yet also go ahead...

Bingo Night

I am really delighted to report that the PTA Bingo Night raised £470 for the school. It was also very much enjoyed by everyone who came along – I would like to thank everyone from the PTA who organised the event.

We are very grateful to all those parents who support the school by giving their time to support PTA activities – we are also always keen to welcome new volunteers. If you think you could help out, please contact Estelle 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”

Many thanks to all those parents who supported our fabulous school play late last term. “Blue Remembered Hills” was splendidly performed by a very young cast and much enjoyed by everyone who came. I would also like to thank Ms May and Miss Shipley for all the hard work that made it possible.

Silver Surfers

We are hoping to hold our first ever “Silver Surfers Day” event on Friday 21st May 2010, between 9.00am and 12.30pm. These events are designed to give older people the chance to develop their ICT skills alongside teenagers and have proved very popular in other schools.

We aim to cover:

- How to email
- How to use the internet
 - E safety
 - Search engines
 - Online shopping
 - Social networking
- Downloading pictures from digital cameras

We would love to welcome large numbers of senior citizens to the school. If you know anyone who might like to come (grandparents of our students are especially welcome), please book a place by emailing Mr Whitehouse (our subject leader for ICT) via school@crofton.hants.sch.uk or phoning Reception. Please leave your contact details so that a programme of the day can be forwarded to you.

Support for parents

The Teen PPP group will start on Wednesday 5th May 2010 at the school. It runs for 8 weeks, between 12.30pm and 2.00pm and any parent is welcome to contact Lisa Dalglish (our Parent Support Adviser) and book a place. Her details are as follows:

Tel: (07867) 970024

l.dalglish@crofton.hants.sch.uk

Lost Property

We have accumulated 10 black sacks full of un-named items of lost property. We no longer have the space to store these articles, and would like to donate them to local charity shops.

We will hold the items, and then finally display them in the Main Hall during lunchtime on the Monday 24 May 2010, through to 4.00pm, to allow students and parents one final chance to claim anything that may belong to them.

Contacting you

Many of you received this letter electronically last time. We had a lot of very positive comments about the e-newsletter – one parent spoke for many:

"I just wanted to say well done on the newsletter. What more could one want? Guaranteed delivery, legible format instead of the rather dog eared version normally received after spending several days in a particularly unpleasant school bag !"

We are really grateful to all those parents who have provided us with mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you have not done so, or your details have changed, please do return the reply slip below.

Summer Term

20 April – 23 July 2010

Half-term: 31 May – 4 June 2010

INSET DAY- 9 JULY 2010

Dates of terms for 2010-11

Autumn Term – 6 September-22 October 2010; 1 November-17 December 2010

(SCHOOL CLOSED 1 AND 4 OCTOBER AND 3 DECEMBER 2010)

Spring Term – 4 January-18 February 2011; 28 February-8 April 2011

(SCHOOL CLOSED 28 JANUARY 2011)

Summer Term – 27 April-27 May 2011; 6 June-27 July 2011

Forthcoming events (2011)

3 MAY	SCHOOL CLOSED (BANK HOLIDAY)
4-14 May	Year 10 work experience
17 May	Year 11 leavers' assembly
17-21 May	German exchange students in Stubbington
23 and 24 June	Year 6 parents' evenings
30 June & 1 July	summer concerts
6 July	Year 6 transition day
15 July	Crofton debate
20 July	Sports Day

Important date change

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

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher

Be kind; Be curious; Always try your best

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

Parents' email address: _____

Parents' mobile number: _____