

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

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope you enjoyed a refreshing and stimulating half-term break. I am sorry there has been such a long interval since my last letter – we had a frantically busy half-term.

### ***School self-evaluation***

One of the important (and time-consuming) jobs the senior leadership team of the school has been doing is the preparation of our annual school Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). This is an OFSTED document which summarises everything we know about the quality of what the school does; changes in the way OFSTED works have meant that we needed to re-write the form from scratch.

Two critical judgements that we needed to make within the SEF concern attainment and achievement. Attainment is measured principally by our GCSE exam results – with 70% of students achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths and 98% achieving 5+ A\*-G, we are confident that our attainment is very good.

Achievement has been more of an issue for the school. In OFSTED terms, achievement is the progress made by the students – basically, it is the difference between their Key Stage 2 (Year 6) test results and their GCSE results. Over the last few years our students, who have generally done very well in Year 6, have not made as much progress as we would like. One way of looking at this is the 'value added' – measured in this way, and compared to a sample of 100 schools, our results declined from 45<sup>th</sup> out of 100 in 2005 to 92<sup>nd</sup> out of 100 in 2008; we were all really delighted to see that they recovered to 66<sup>th</sup> out of 100 in 2009. Clearly, this shows that we have plenty more to do; however, it is really encouraging to see that we have reversed the trend.

It is important to keep these results in proportion – there is good evidence to show that Crofton students do unusually well once they leave us. We receive post-16 destination figures from the Connexions Service - of the 214 students in the year group, 203 have gone on to college or 6<sup>th</sup> form, 5 have secured apprenticeships, 2 are at work and 3 have either moved away or cannot be contacted. This means that just one student has failed to find a place – this is a really impressive set of outcomes and we are really proud of our students' choices.

### ***Half-term highlights***

As I say, it was a frantically busy and highly enjoyable half-term. We very much enjoyed welcoming parents from all 5 year groups to information evenings in September – large numbers of parents attended and (I hope) received valuable advice about how to support their children this year. We also enjoyed showing off the school to prospective parents and their children at our Open Evening.

Crofton students travelled extensively – folk in Year 8 had a week of team-building at Fairthorne Manor while very large numbers in Year 9 went to Osmington Bay for our first large-scale residential. The annual German Exchange visit to Bochum was as successful while an intrepid group of students and staff broke new ground for Crofton with a geography trip to Iceland.

Our noble volunteers in the Crofton School Association ran a highly enjoyable quiz night in October and we finished with another wonderful Charities Week – Mr Milliken and colleagues organised a sensational series of events and, with the money still rolling in we are already well over the £4000 mark.

### ***Fire alarms***

After such a first-rate start to the year, it was bitterly disappointing to deal with 3 malicious fire alarms in the first week back. I need to put this into perspective, too – there has been only one previous false alarm since I came to the school in January 2008 and, on that occasion, the person responsible immediately owned up.

I am relieved to say that we identified and punished the students responsible within 24 hours. You will appreciate that we needed to take a very firm line with this behaviour; quite apart from the disturbance it caused to teaching and learning that day, false alarms are serious because there is a risk that they will reduce our sense of urgency should there be a real fire and because they may undermine the high levels of trust that students enjoy within the school.

I have explained to students that any future malicious fire alarm will be dealt with the utmost severity.

### **Mock Exams**

Year 11 students will begin their mock GCSE exams on Monday 30 November. We are encouraging students to take these exams very seriously – they will provide good practice for the 'real thing' in the summer and the opportunity to learn from mistakes; they will also provide an accurate measure of how well students are progressing. Parents will receive a summary of the results early next term.

### **Diplomas**

Parents of Year 9 students should have received a letter about the new diploma courses. A series of information evenings will be taking place at schools and colleges that will be offering them. Please note the dates and times:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Hair and Beauty	Foundation and higher	Wednesday 9 December 2009	7.00pm	Fareham College
Engineering	Foundation and higher	Wednesday 9 December 2009	7.00pm	Fareham College
Creative and Media	Higher	Thursday 10 December 2009	7.00pm	Brookfield
Creative and Media	Higher	Thursday 3 December 2009	7.00pm	Brune Park
Creative and Media	Higher	Wednesday 9 December 2009	7.00pm	Portchester
IT	Higher	Monday 16 November 2009	7.00pm	Bay House
Business Admin and Finance	Higher	Monday 30 November 2009 Tuesday 1 December 2009	7.00pm 7.00pm	Bay House Crofton
Society Health and Development	Foundation and higher	Tuesday 12 January 2010	7.00pm	Fareham Collete
Enviroment and Land Based	Foundation and higher	Wednesday 2 December 2009	7.00pm	Henry Cort

### **Crofton Community Question Time - cyclists**

I was delighted to attend this event at Holy Rood Church on Sunday 4 October 2009. A large number of local residents came along and asked questions of a panel which also included representatives from the borough council, the police, a local GP surgery and the church.

Many of the people in the audience seemed very supportive of the school and of its students. However, it was striking that the issue of cycling on pavements was very prominent, with older people particularly concerned. It was acknowledged that the roads can be very dangerous and that cyclists of all ages sometimes use the pavements – however, there was a strong feeling that some cyclists were inconsiderate and did not always give pedestrians any warning of their approach.

If your son/daughter does cycle around the village, please discuss this matter with them – they should cycle slowly and at a distance from the entrances to houses and gardens, particularly around blind corners; they should keep a careful look-out, especially for the elderly.

### **New Parent Governor**

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Diane Orsmy who was elected as a Parent Governor on 23 October 2009. There is still one Parent Governor vacancy; if you would like to help the school in this vital work, please contact Mrs Sue Harvey on (01329) 666866.

### **Adult education**

I am really excited to report that the first adult education classes run at Crofton for many years have now started. In association with Highbury College, we are offering:

- a five week Christmas Crafts course, starting Wednesday 18 November 2009 at the new time of 6.00pm-8.00pm
- a four week digital camera course, starting Monday 23 November, 2009 (4.00pm – 6.00pm)

Places are still available and both courses are FREE. To book, call the school on (01329) 664251 and check the website for details of courses starting in January 2010.

### **Parent Support Workshops**

In association with Parentline Plus, we will be holding a parent support workshop

'got a teenager, coping with teen issues' – Tuesday 1 December 2009 (7.00pm – 9.00pm)

To reserve a place, please call the school on (01329) 664251.

**NEW** – Relate Family Support sessions are now available. Please contact Lisa Dalglish, Parent Support Adviser for information about this free service on (07867) 970024 or email: [lisadalglish@hants.gov.uk](mailto:lisadalglish@hants.gov.uk).

### **Traffic**

Traffic around the school continues to cause problems. Parking on the school site is very difficult – PLEASE do not bring your car into school at the beginning or end of the school day unless you absolutely have to.

We are also worried about the speed at which some vehicles travel while on site. With so many children at both Crofton and Baycroft schools it really is essential that motor vehicles proceed at walking pace at all times. Some of our students are careless about their own safety – please take this into account if you are driving on or near the school site.

### **Student Absences**

We have been experiencing a high volume of 'whole day' student absences due to hospital and dental appointments.

Wherever possible, do please try to ensure that your son/daughter does attend for as much of the day as they can – every lesson counts.

### **E-mails from the school**

We have very nearly solved the technical problems which have been delaying our e-mail project and hope to be in a position to send messages to you electronically early in the new year. We hope that this will make communication more reliable (as important messages will no longer get lost in the bottom of school-bags) and less environmentally damaging.

In order to make it work, we need an up-to-date e-mail address for as many families as possible. If you have not already returned your annual data-checking sheet, please do so as soon as possible; if you have already done so but have not included an e-mail address, please do so, using the reply slip at the bottom of this letter.

### **Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit**

We have received a letter from Fareham Borough Council asking us to publicise a change in the way assessments are made for these 2 benefits. This explains that, from 2 November, Child Benefit will no longer be counted as income against Housing or Council Tax benefits – this will mean a significant increase in the number of people who qualify for them. They suggest that families check the advice at [www.direct.gov.uk/DoItOnline](http://www.direct.gov.uk/DoItOnline) or that they get in touch with FBC's Benefit Office (via 01329 236100).

### **Important dates**

13 November	– Year 11 Maths GCSE exams
19 November	– Year 10 Science GCSE exams
19 November	– Year 11 Parent Consultation
26 November	– Year 12 Certificate Evening
10 December	– Year 7 Parent Consultation
15 & 16 December	– Christmas Concerts

### **Autumn Term**

End of term: 18 December 2009

### **Spring Term**

4 January – 1 April 2009

Half-term: 15 – 19 February 2009

### **Summer Term**

20 April – 23 July

Half-term: 31 May – 4 June

INSET day: 9 July

The next half-term is a crucial one, with GCSE exams for students in years 10 and 11 and the beginning of the options process for those in Year 9. Do stay in touch – if you have any questions or if you are worried about your child’s progress or well-being do, please, let us know.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming  
Headteacher

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Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor group: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents’ email address: \_\_\_\_\_