

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

Dear Parents/Guardians

Headteacher's letter to parents - September 2009

I hope that you have enjoyed relaxing and refreshing summer holidays – it was delightful to welcome all of our students back last week and particularly exciting to welcome all those who are new to the school. The school year has begun well, with a sense of purpose and expectation in the air.

Our new Year 7s seem to be settling in happily. The vast majority always make the move to senior school without any problems, of course – however, if your son or daughter has any problems, do please get in touch with their tutor straight away – we want every single one of them to make a good start.

Several new staff have joined us too. Mr Glasspool is our new School Business Manager while Miss Eagles is our new Subject Leader for geography; we also welcome Mrs Hayward (Administrative Assistant/Receptionist), Miss Norman (Cover Supervisor), Ms Shipley (Drama Teacher), Miss Hill (English Teacher), Mr Farley (History Teacher), Ms Marshall (Inclusion Supervisor), Mr Marshall (ICT Teacher), Miss Hamilton and Miss Kettle (Learning Support Assistants), Mr Cevik and Mrs Watkins (Maths teachers), Mrs Lindsay (One-to-One Tutor), Miss Martin, Miss Field and Miss Lamb (Science teachers), Miss Turner (Science Technician), and Miss Powell (Technology Teacher). Miss Huh, Mr Willetts and Mrs Simpson join us as students under the GTP scheme (see below).

GCSE results

As you may have seen in the newspapers, the students who left this summer achieved impressive results. Fully 70% of them achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths – this is the best outcome the school has had in recent years and we are all delighted by it. In addition, all but 2 of our students achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-G – I believe that this confirms that the school is far from elitist and that the efforts we have made to include and support all of our students have paid off.

GCSE results day was enormously enjoyable, as usual, with dozens of happy and excited young people enjoying the recognition that their efforts and ability deserved. Of course, their achievements would have been impossible without the hard work and dedication of staff at the school and I would like to record my thanks to each and every one of them for what has been achieved.

The results this year were good but we are far from complacent. We are now analysing them in great detail in order to identify areas for improvement – we consider each subject, the relative performance of boys and girls and of students of different abilities, the impact of coursework, the impact of support sessions and academic intervention and so on. We are determined that students currently at the school will achieve even higher levels of exam success in years to come.

New term reminders

The start of the school year sometimes comes as a bit of a culture shock – we are keen that students settle into a routine as quickly as possible.

Could I ask that all parents:

- Check and return their data collection sheet (this will be sent home shortly). We are particularly keen to receive up-to-date email addresses as we plan to offer enhanced email contact with the school later this year; an up-to-date mobile phone number will ensure that you receive important text messages
- If your daughter/son is in Year 7-9, they will have been given a Curriculum Booklet full of information about the year ahead. Please ask them to show it to you
- Check students' homework planners once a week and sign to show that you have done so; have a look through the rest of the planner as it too is full of useful information
- Ensure that you have read and signed the cycle permit page in the planner if your son/daughter will be cycling to school
- Encourage students to do homework on the evening that it is set
- Ask your children about targets for the new year – these will be recorded in planners during the next few weeks (except in the case of Year 7, for whom the process will take a little longer)
- Encourage students to go to bed at a sensible time so that they arrive with us fresh and enthusiastic for 8.40am!

Admissions

We will be holding our annual Open Evening for parents of Year 6 students on **Tuesday 22nd September**. Even if you already have a child at the school, you are most welcome to come and bring your Year 6 child with you – it is a really good opportunity for them to see what the school is like and to help them and you make an informed choice regarding their secondary education. The school will be open from 6.45pm until 8.45pm and there will be presentations in the main hall at 7pm and 8pm.

Early finish

In order to allow time for colleagues to set up their displays for the Open Evening, school will finish at the earlier time of 12.40pm on Tuesday 22nd September.

Absences

I understand that a number of parents received a text message asking about uncleared absences from the 2008/9 school year. This message was intended only for those parents who had received a letter about outstanding absences in July; it was evidently sent to others by mistake. I do apologise for any inconvenience or anxiety that this may have caused.

If you did receive the July letter, we would be most grateful if you would provide explanations for any outstanding absences within the next week.

Breakfast

As you may have heard, our caterers are now offering a breakfast service. The canteen is open between 8.00am and 8.30am and serves a variety of really delicious hot and cold breakfast items. Students are most welcome to come into school early to try what is on offer – however, they must remain in and around the canteen as there is no supervision in other parts of the school.

Students who are not buying breakfast should try to arrive between 08.30am and 8.40am, so that they can be in their tutor rooms for a prompt start to registration at 8.45am.

Holidays in term time

I would like to repeat my request to parents not to take children away from school to go on holiday during the school term. There is a very strong link between good attendance and good progress – even well-motivated students find it very difficult to catch up properly when they miss lessons. We are always very reluctant to authorise holiday absence.

Training as a teacher

In common with other schools, we want to encourage people to consider a career in teaching. Teaching is the most wonderfully rewarding profession and it is never too late to start!

We want to attract the very best people to work at Crofton School and so we have begun to participate in the Graduate Teacher Programme – this scheme allows people of all ages to become teachers whilst working full-time at school. We are working with the University of Chichester and have welcomed our first 2 trainees this term.

There will be an Open Evening for anyone interested in the scheme on **Tuesday 13th October**. If you have a degree in a relevant academic subject and would like to know more about the scheme, or to visit us on the 13th, please contact

Mrs Hlavaty, who is our Professional Tutor, (b.hlavaty@crofton.hants.sch.uk) for more details. There is more information on our website.

Governors

I am delighted to report that we have 2 new governors – Mrs M Swanson has been appointed as a Parent Governor while Mrs G Sommers of Fareham College joins us as a Partnership Governor.

Our governing body offers outstanding support to the school and I am most grateful for the time that members give up on our behalf.

Parenting support

As you may know, we now have a Parenting Support Adviser. Lisa Dalglish is working for us and for our linked junior schools and is able to offer a wide range of courses and consultancy. "The Triple P Course" is one of these and details are given below.

- **Triple P Group** for parents of children up to 11 years.
- An 8 week positive parenting programme
- Starting Wednesday 30th September 2009 10.00am-12.00pm
- To be held in the conference room, Crofton School
- To be a part of the course contact Lisa Dalglish 07867970024 or e-mail lisa.dalglish@hants.gov.uk
- **Triple P Teen** for parents of teenagers (12years and up)
- An 8 week positive parenting programme
- Starting Monday 28th September 2009 7.00pm - 9.00pm
- To be held in the conference room, Crofton School
- Contact details as above

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Crofton School Association

The CSA is a group of noble parents and friends of the school who organise social events, raise money for extra school equipment and help out at school meetings by providing refreshments and support for staff. They do a fantastic job for us; we hope they also enjoy being closely involved in the life of the school.

They will be organising a quiz night on Friday 9 October. They tell me that it is a quiz with a difference – a Sensations Quiz, no less – with tickets at just £5 per head. The quiz begins at 7.00pm, there will be a fish and chip supper and a licensed bar; you can put a team of up to 10 together, or form/join a team on the night. It is intended as a fun event for the whole family – tickets will be available from the finance office from mid September.

The CSA Annual General Meeting takes place on Thursday 15 October, beginning at 7.00pm. If you would like to get involved, do please get in touch – it is a really good way of helping the school and also of getting to know other parents. The Chair of the CSA will be elected at the Annual General Meeting – the existing team can be contacted via csa@crofton.hants.sch.uk.

Messages for children at school

Should parents – in exceptional circumstances - need a message delivered to their children during the school day, can you ***please ensure that your message is received by the school by 2.30pm.***

Forthcoming events

- 17 September – Year 10 Information Evening 7.00pm
- 22 September – Open Evening 6.45pm (school finishes at 12.40pm)
- 24 September – Year 9 Information Evening 7.00pm (followed by Residential Briefing Meeting)
- 30 September – Year 8 Information Evening 7.00pm
- 1 October – Year 7 Parent/Tutor Meeting 3.30-5.30pm
- 1 October – Year 11 Information Evening 7.00pm
- 2 October – INSET day – school closed for students
- 6 October – Year 7 Parents Information Evening 7.00pm
- 9 October – CSA Quiz Night 7.00pm
- 15 October – CSA AGM 7.00pm

Autumn Term

Half-term: 26 – 30 October 2009
INSET day: 2 November 2009
End of term: 18 December 2009

Spring Term

4 January – 1 April 2010
Half-term: 15 – 19 February 2010

Summer Term

20 April – 23 July 2010
Half-term: 31 May – 4 June 2010
INSET day: 9 July 2010

Everyone at the school is looking forward to an enjoyable and successful year. We hope that your son/daughter will achieve all that they are capable of.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher

Enc: Swine flu update letter