

Our ref: ML/AD/Parent Letter/Feb 2008

February 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian

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

I write this letter at the beginning of my third full week at Crofton; as I said in my previous letter, I am keen to work in partnership with parents and so it is my intention to write to you regularly, to keep you up-to-date.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few days here and have already learned a great deal about the school. I have been really impressed by lots of what I have seen – students and staff have been exceptionally welcoming. I have visited many lessons and enjoyed talking to students about their work and about other aspects of school life. I can see that the school has enormous potential and I am formulating a Strategic Improvement Plan.

#### ***Parents and School Improvement***

As you know, I also want to hear parents' views about the school. We will be conducting a full written survey later in the term which will be sent home to all parents. I would also like to invite you to an additional **Parents' Information Evening on Thursday 7 February, from 7.30 until 8.30pm**. I will present some of my initial findings about the school and share our provisional plans for school improvement. There will then be an opportunity to ask questions and to make suggestions. It will not be appropriate to discuss specific incidents or individual experiences at this meeting – the focus will be on general issues and priorities.

#### ***Bullying***

You may have seen that the school was mentioned in The News earlier this month following a complaint from a parent about the way in which we had handled an incident of bullying. I would like to reassure all parents that we take our responsibilities in this area very seriously and are determined that every student should enjoy their time at school and be free from the fear of bullying of all kinds. **It is vital that incidents of bullying are reported to us**, either by the student concerned or by their parents, so that we can intervene. If you have any questions or worries about bullying at the school, please contact your child's tutor in the first instance.

#### ***Behaviour***

We want the school to be a happy place, where students and staff feel at home and where there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect. Behaviour is generally very good, with the overwhelming majority of students clearly being well-motivated, right-thinking people. However, as you may have heard, I have spoken in Assembly about behaviour issues that I have dealt with this term. In particular, I have pointed out that violent behaviour of any kind, swearing and refusal to follow reasonable instructions are absolutely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. I was sad (and slightly surprised) to have to say this because I know that Crofton students know that these things have no place in our school.

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### ***Attendance***

As you may know, the school introduced new software for managing attendance records (amongst other things) in September. Partly as a result of this change, it appears that a number of absences have been incorrectly coded as 'unauthorised'. We want to make sure that every student's attendance record is accurate so we will be contacting all parents affected to check. **This may mean that we have to ask you about absences for which you have already provided a note** – please accept my apologies for this. We are not allowed to authorise absences without written notes from parents.

### ***Planners***

Students are all issued with Planners and we want them to use them. Tutors in Years 7-9 have been asked to check and sign Planners regularly, so that they can monitor completion of homework. **We would be very grateful if parents could also check Planners** and sign to show that they have done so.

### ***Important Date Change***

There will be an **additional INSET day on Tuesday 25 March 2008** for curriculum planning purposes. The government has introduced a number of significant changes and suggested that schools add a 6<sup>th</sup> INSET day in order to plan for them.

### ***Arrival Time***

Most students currently enjoy access to their tutor rooms before school, at break and at lunchtime. Many staff attend a briefing meeting at 8.30am each morning and this restricts the number available to supervise students before the day begins. As such, we have decided that students will not be allowed into tutor rooms (or, indeed school buildings) before 8.40am, except when the weather is bad. This will allow duty staff to supervise them more effectively. Please discourage your son/daughter from arriving at school earlier than they have to.

### ***Uniform***

Thank you for your support with uniform. As you can imagine, it is a subject about which many students have wanted to talk to me! I expect discussions about uniform to continue, but in the short-term I would like to remind students that:

- they are not allowed to wear jumpers, other than uniform ones with logos
- they are allowed to wear coats, as long as they are plain and without substantial logos
- they must wear sensible black school shoes

**Students who arrive at school without the correct uniform may be sent home to change (if a parent can be contacted) or isolated for the day.**

### ***Residents of Whiteley***

Finally, I have been asked to ask whether any parent who brings their son/daughter to school from the Whiteley area would be interested in sharing lifts. If you are interested in this possibility, please contact the school office.

I am sorry about this long list – I hope that, as a school and as a community, we can resolve these issues very quickly. Crofton is an exciting place with hard-working staff, able students and supportive parents – its prospects are excellent. I look forward to meeting more of you and to working with all of you.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming  
Headteacher