

0.Our ref: ML/AD/Parent Letter/June 2008

June2008

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope that you and your family have enjoyed a restful and enjoyable half-term holiday.

As I write this letter, the main exam season is well and truly under way, with Year 11 on study leave, Year 10 preparing for their main exams and Year 9 recovering from theirs. Students know how important the next few weeks are and there is a focused and purposeful atmosphere around the school.

New Governors

I would like to welcome the following kind Governors who have recently joined our Governing Body:

Dr David Chilvers *LEA*
Mr Paul Carpenter)
Mr Andrew Smith) *Parent Governors*
Mr Eric Yorke)
Ms Amanda Knight *Staff*

As a school, we depend absolutely on the hard work and support of our Governors and we are very grateful to all of them for their efforts on our behalf.

Year 11

Just before half-term, we enjoyed Year 11's final assembly and the Prom. As a newcomer to the school, it was my first experience of both of these much-anticipated events. I enjoyed both enormously – the students involved were a credit to the school, to their parents and themselves. Year 11's departure is always a time of mixed emotions – we are excited for them as they set out on the next stage of their life-journeys but also very sorry to see them go. I hope that they feel they will always be part of the Crofton community and are welcome to come back and visit when they can.

Text messaging

Feedback from parents about our new text messaging facility has been very encouraging, so we have decided to adopt it permanently. We intend to use it to notify parents of important school events (parents' evenings, exams etc), to warn parents of letters that might otherwise get lost in students' bags and to help us to contact individual parents in emergencies. We hope that you will find it useful.

If we do not have your current mobile number, we would ask that you update us. Please contact Mrs Harvey in Reception.

Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for students' academic progress and for their social, moral, spiritual, cultural and physical development. The achievement of regular attendance and consistent punctuality by students at school are also important preparations for later life. Of course, some students cannot attend as much as they would like – it is the school's responsibility to support them so that the effect on their progress is minimised.

I am pleased that we will now be working more closely with our colleagues at the Fareham Locality Team of Hampshire County Council's Children's Services department to support students and their families where attendance and/or punctuality is a problem. They will be meeting Heads of Year every fortnight and reviewing registers to identify such students. They will then be planning intervention – the form of this intervention will of course vary depending on individual circumstances.

If you have any questions about school attendance, Sue McFadden (our Family Support Worker) can be contacted on (01329) 820330.

Uniform

As you may have heard, our Student Leadership Team and the Year Councils have led a consultation on uniform rules. They have concluded that students are happy with the uniform overall but they have requested a number of changes of detail.

As such, we have decided to relax and clarify the rules on socks, gloves, scarves and coats. Students may now wear socks of any colour or design (this change has promoted considerable excitement and some creativity, as you can imagine...). Similarly, they may wear gloves, scarves and coats of any colour or design (except that there must be no offensive logos or text and 'hoodies' remain unacceptable). Arrangements for PE are not affected by these changes.

Students asked that we clarify arrangements for the hottest part of the summer. When the weather improves, we will inform students that they no longer need to bring their blazers to school. At that stage, they will only be allowed to wear coats if they are also wearing blazers. Interestingly, students rejected the idea of polo shirts as a summer alternative.

Students also asked that we investigate a more comfortable school jumper (which we will now pursue) and that we allow trousers of any shade of grey (which we will now do).

I hope that these new expectations are clear and that students will be happy with them. If you or they are in any doubt when deciding about a new piece of clothing that will be worn to school, do please contact your child's tutor or Head of Year before buying it.

Water

I hope that the weather will soon improve and that we will all enjoy a first-rate summer. I would like to remind parents of the school's position on students' drinking water in lessons.

We think that drinking throughout the day is vital for health and good for learning. As such, we hope that students will bring a clear plastic water bottle with a 'sports' top and that they will drink from it in all lessons other than Art, Science and Technology.

Visiting school

I hope that parents feel that we are keen to see you and enjoy welcoming you to the school. The education of your son/daughter is most effective when there is a genuine partnership between home and school.

However, I do need to remind parents of the desirability of making an appointment and of the importance of signing in at Reception. While it may sometimes be possible to see parents at short notice and we will always want to respond instantly if there is a genuine emergency, staff at school are busy people with planned days. It is very much better to make an appointment – this will reduce waiting time and will also ensure that the most appropriate member of staff is available.

It is absolutely essential that visitors to the school make themselves known at Reception. The security of our students is of paramount importance to us – please do not visit any part of the school without coming to Reception first.

Parking

We are acutely aware that we have fewer parking spaces than we would like and that parking is a real problem for parents when they collect students at the end of the day. We are pleased that such a high proportion of our students walk or cycle to school and hope that more will do so in the future.

There is considerable potential for accidents at the end of the school day, as pedestrians, cyclists and motorists share a narrow and congested area outside the school. The situation is further complicated by our sharing the site with Baycroft School. Students there have particular needs and I attach a letter from Chris Toner, my colleague there, in which she explains the issues. I would ask that parents drive onto the school site as infrequently as possible and exercise great care when they have no option but to do so.

Important dates

Tuesday 3 – Wednesday 11 June: Year 10 Geography Fieldtrips

Friday 13 June: Year 7 visit to Intech

Thursdays 19 and 26 June: Year 6 Parents' Evenings

Thursday 3 July: Crofton Debate

Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 July: Summer Concert

Thursday 10 July: Year 6 Taster Day

Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 July: Faculty Days

Monday 21 July: Sports Day

Wednesday 23 July: End of term (lunchtime finish - further details to follow)

I hope that you will consider joining us on Thursday 3 July for the annual Crofton Debate. Each year, we focus on a particular issue of scientific and ethical significance – this time, we will be looking a research using stem cells. This is a fascinating and controversial topic and should raise a lot of interesting questions – we start at 6pm with an address by Dr Neil Smyth of Southampton University. Admission is free but we ask that you obtain tickets in advance from Reception – there is more information on the school website.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Leeming
Headteacher

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