
Principal's Newsletter

14 February 2020

Dear Parents,

As educators, we praise our pupils and students when they make a good effort. We particularly praise improvement, technically termed progress. After my sentences of carping criticism of parking behaviour, I must write to praise those parents who have clearly adjusted their behaviour. This morning only a few cars parked illegally. It makes a huge difference to the traffic flow on Queens Drive. It is infinitely safer. So thank you.

There always has to be a next target. I have a request from a parent asking for consideration of cyclists using the path in front of the Prep School and generally. Cycling reduces our traffic problem and should be encouraged, not condemned.

Our other target concerns uniform and especially coats and especially middle and upper school coats. Our policy is that these should be black, without fur and without writing on them. Our policy is also that pupils may not wear coats to lessons. The reason for this latter injunction is not difficult to apprehend. Our uniform would simply disappear into a mass of puffer jackets without that policy.

After half term all pupils will once again be reminded of all policies related to coats. Then a period of enforcement will commence with heads of house and others on the gate. Let's get this sorted.

We are still flying at 100 miles an hour, right up to the end of Friday detention at 17.20 this afternoon.

There is serious pace in Prep School assemblies and Mr Ainscough revealed his new guitar, a gift from the PTA. Thank you! We then all sang a mathematics song intended to reinforce certain properties of arithmetic. What a great start to the day.

Earlier in the week I went looking for my Year 6 rugby players for some training before our big sevens tournament. They appeared to have disappeared, the fields of competition lying fallow. But instead, they were taking part in the big debate. Across the Prep School, pupils were proposing and opposing motions, with rapt audiences of younger pupils getting involved. Here was another example of the advantages of an all-through school - in debating and in rugby we can start early!

This was also a week of trips. The A level Spanish students are in Seville, or Sevilla, on a culture and language visit. The classicists gazed on the face of Clytemnestra and the vase depictions of Achilles, the characters they have read about, while perambulating the enormous British Museum, that collection of imperial plunder. They returned exhausted from their day training up and down, walking, talking and learning, but also hugely inspired.

An update from Mrs Webb on our [eco projects](#):

7 Selwyn's are now half way through their Eco Recycling Challenge and have so far collected 99 Eco Bottles and over 5000 plastic bottle tops. Please continue to collect plastic bottle tops and fill 2 litre bottles to their maximum with plastic over the half term holiday as the project will carry on until Easter. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Our netballers are continuing their successes. We have teams in the final, we keep winning. Last Saturday we also played some great matches against Ellesmere College, the first opposition team to draw blood against our 1st XI.

The process of moving into our own boarding facility is under way. The Year 13 boarders who will live in Beechlands in 2020-2021 before the launch of Year 7-13 boarding, are beginning to wrap their minds around the reality of moving, a process which is described as the third most emotionally traumatic thing humans experience after bereavement and divorce. They are moving from atomized university accommodation to a truly collective student house. One boarder explained he could not possibly live in a place where he did not have his own shower. We are helping him come to terms.

On Tuesday, Mr Sandy Mill, the recently appointed director of admissions of Sidney Sussex College, gave a 90 minute talk to our aspiring Oxbridge candidates and candidates from other schools. His advice could easily be applied by students who are not intending to apply. If one had to summarize it, it would be geek out, and do not stop being curious about things and doing things to sate your curiosity about them.

The house scores are being announced today during the final of our talent show, the summation of another half term's effort in the classroom and, in the quiz room, on runs around Sefton Park, in charitable activity and in-your-face athletics and sporting contests. My thanks to all our staff who give that extra bit to make sure our pupils experience school as a smorgasbord of learning, a fiesta of activities.

A quick reminder that lessons resume on Tuesday 25 February, not Monday. Our staff will have an INSET day on Monday, exploring our plans to move the school onward and upward, and sharing ideas in the development of our curriculum. Shortly after this INSET, we will have a visit from our Danish friends, here to advise us and reflect on what we and they are doing.

Half term should be a time of relaxation, reflection, and in some cases, controlled revision. We are very proud of the way our Year 11 engaged with their mock exams, their second set

of mocks, this past week. Mr Griffith has reported to me that there is a great spirit in the group and an earnest desire to succeed.

The Department for Education has asked us to highlight the latest guidance and public health advice regarding Coronavirus which can be found [here](#) and also [here](#). The school will continue to follow all advice from Public Health England.

May I wish you and yours a peaceful and restful half term holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal