

Ref: HWH/NLE/whlsch/parent

September 2008

Dear Parent/Carer

We have started our second academic year with the need to continue to build on some of the real achievements of last year.

We remain proud of the students and staff who have all worked together well, especially in establishing good relationships between all students in the school.

The examination results have been mixed and we are able to celebrate some important successes for a number of our students at the end of Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. We know that there is more to be done at Key Stage 4 where our results were disappointing but with some encouraging individual successes. We must congratulate those students. Thirty-seven students have achieved their A level grades to take them into higher education and onto Universities including one student now at Oxford reading Biology.

During this academic year our focus on standards must not be deflected as we work to achieve challenging and ambitious targets. Your support and direct involvement is and will continue to be important to us.

Uniform

Thank you for working with us to ensure that our students are in full uniform each school day. They have responded to a high standard which we must maintain.

Year 11 – Work Experience

Students have just completed their two weeks work experience placements and we thank you for your support in working with us and employers in making it a worthwhile and rewarding experience. A celebration evening will take place on Thursday 2nd October to mark their achievement. During the evening we will also share practical advice and guidance on how to support your child during Year 11 (see separate letter).

SATs results

You will be aware that there have been nation-wide difficulties with the administration of the SATs this year. We have still not had the results validated and as such we are unable to publish these to parents/carers. Please accept my apologies for this which is outside the control of the school. The Department for Children Schools and Families have indicated that the validated data will be sent to school by 3rd October.

Student Planner and Supported Self Study (SSS)

All students have been issued with a personal planner which includes practical advice and information to support their progress and achievement in school. Personal organisation is essential at secondary school and we appreciate your support in ensuring that your child is able to bring to school a range of basic equipment for every lesson. Every student has recorded their Supported Self Study (SSS) timetable into their planner and we have attached a copy for you. Please continue to promote the importance of SSS and check your child's planner weekly.

Ramadan & Eid

As we come towards the end of Ramadan, some of our students and staff will celebrate Eid. The date is to be confirmed (Tuesday 30 September or Wednesday 1 October). We recognise that some students and staff will be absent for religious observance for one day only. The school will remain open for students and staff and we will follow our normal set pattern and timetable. A small number of classes may be merged on Tuesday 30 September or Wednesday 1 October.

Lunch time arrangements

All students, with the exception of Years 12 and 13, must remain on site at lunch times. We ask for your confirmed support in reminding students of this expectation. We would like to discourage students from consuming soft drinks with caffeine content such as Red Bull. These should not be brought to school or form part of packed lunches.

Students arriving and leaving school

We would continue to encourage students (and parents) to use the Dover Road entrance/exit point where appropriate. There is a member of staff at this gate each day.

The main car park is increasingly busy with vehicles dropping off and collecting students at the start and end of days. For the safety of our school community we continue to ask that parents **avoid** driving onto the site during the busy start and end of school.

Attendance and Punctuality Matters

We recognise the importance of 100% attendance and good punctuality. We seek your support in ensuring that this is a target for your child. We will continue to operate a system of phone calls home if students are absent and we have not been informed.

Governance

We have a vacancy for a parent to join the governing body of the school. Details will be sent out on how to nominate and vote. We would be grateful for you to take time to consider this role in the school.

Key Dates

- **Thursday 2nd October** 7.00 – 8.30pm Year 11 work experience celebration and 'Supporting your child in year 11' evening
- **Tuesday 7th October** 6.30 for 6.45pm Parents Forum (Open meeting for all parents)
- **Wednesday 8th October** 6.30pm OPEN EVENING for Y6 students/prospective parents for September 2009 entry
- **Thursday 16th October** 6.30pm Year 7 Parents workshops
- **Friday 24th October** School closes at 3.15pm for half term
- **Monday 27th – Friday 31st Oct** **Half Term holiday**
- **Monday 3rd November** Back to school
- **Wednesday 12th November** 10am to 6pm Learning Review Day (students only attend school with parent/carer for individual appointments to discuss

progress/targets). Further details about the arrangements for this day will follow in a separate letter.

Thank you for your involvement in so many aspects of our work and for your continued support for the school and students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H W Howe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

H W Howe CBE
Head Teacher