



7 January 2010

Dear Parent

Many congratulations to our Cranbrook candidates who have all been successful in their very competitive entrance examinations and have been offered places in Year 9. Well done! At the time of writing, our Vinehall ski trip is going very well and due back to snowy England on Sunday.

Thank you for supporting our decision to close school half a day early at the end of last term and for your help in communications and transport to ensure that it all went very smoothly. I hope that you have been able to enjoy the snow with your family at the same time as withstanding the inconvenience of such severe weather over the last week. We do hope to open for boarders as planned on Tuesday 12th January and for day pupils on 13th January and, as usual, we shall do all that we can to keep the school open for your convenience. If you have any concerns whatsoever about the safety of travelling in to school, please do not take any risks and we will of course understand if your children are prevented from attending owing to travel problems where you are.

Please refer to the school's infoline for updates on weather/road conditions and school opening by calling 01580 883058.

The new 35-minute lesson timetable introduced in September 2009 is bedding in well and we are working on plans for September 2010 when Saturday school will be in place formally for Years 7 and 8 and a programme of optional activities will be offered to juniors.

The Lent 2010 Calendar should arrive soon in hard copy and is already available on the school website for your reference. We recognise that the Vinehall calendar is a busy one and we are grateful to parents who seem prepared to pay for extra trips and educational experiences. Recently, the Year 6 parents were overwhelmingly positive in their support of our two residential trips in Year 7, to the Isle of Wight and to France, which will go ahead next academic year. I welcome parental comment regarding the value of extras such as outings and I assure you that we only aim to cover our costs when charging-on sums for school trips.

This term brings parents' evenings for some Year groups, regular assessment grades to keep you informed of your child's efforts at school and written reports at the end of term. You may remember that we introduced a system of simple format reports in Lent 2009 and we shall continue with that process. We are as keen as ever to ensure that we provide you with a good level of support and information about the progress of your child/ren. Please contact form teachers over general issues and Mrs. Cooper regarding serious or discipline-related concerns relating to junior pupils. Subject teachers can be contacted through the school office. Mrs. Redstone is happy to meet with parents regarding future schools choices and deals with the bigger academic picture, including predicted results and overall academic progress. Mr. Yeats-Brown is in charge of major disciplinary issues relating to senior pupils and Mr. Whitehead and I take on serious concerns at the next level. When you raise issues with us, we aim to pass them on to the person best placed to deal with a concern in the first instance. Contact details are provided in the school Calendar and we are all contactable through the School Office.

Please have a look at the 'Archive' section of our Vinehall website. It has been updated with full sports reports and full leavers' profile pages as well as full reports from the school magazine. We do not have space for all of the sporting and leavers' news in the magazine and so the archive allows us to include more information and longer reports. To access the archive area, first click on 'Archive' at

the top of the main website home page, then select from the list of subject areas. The leavers' section is password protected and our pupils know the code but if you need to know it, please ask at school!

As you are aware, we will not be sending out clubs sign-up sheets. If you wish to join through the website, the list of clubs is available on the pupils' section of the website. See the end of term letter from December for further details.

The collection of Vinehall photographs on our Fotki website has been updated (www.fotki.com/vinehallschool). All photos on the site can be printed direct from your own computer without ordering. Simply open the photo by clicking on the thumbnail picture in the chosen album, and then right click on the chosen photo. A drop-down list will appear offering several options including printing, emailing or saving the picture. This is free.

Our four new gappers are Mr. Tim Middleton from England and Kirsty Lee, Kevin Ingram-Wilson and Kelsey McIntosh from Australia. They are sporty, sociable and keen to support the children and they will be available for babysitting across this year as usual.

Mrs. Hunter takes over Mrs. Raymond's role as Head of French, form teacher and teacher until the end of this academic year. Mrs. Atkins, Head of Learning Support, is now to be known as Ms De Vine.

The school office has reopened and you might like to drop off kit bags during office hours on Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th January if it suits you. Boarders' parents are invited to afternoon tea from 4.30pm to 5.30pm on Tuesday 13th January.

Day pupils should be collected at 3.50 pm on the first full day back, Wednesday, 13th January, please. We hope that parents of pupils in years 7 and 8 will be able to support the 'Get Study Smart' presentation which has been reconvened for Saturday, 16th January at 11.30 in the theatre (travel permitting) and will provide plenty of advice as to how we can best support our Year 7s and 8s with their learning. The children will be given strategies to help pinpoint areas for attention and will be directed towards proven study and revision strategies by Mr. David Thomson of Futuremind.

I hope that you have managed to visit the hairdresser despite the snow! As usual, I would be grateful if you could ensure that your child's hair is trimmed and tidy for the fresh term. For boys, this means off the collar, out of the eyes and off the ears! Girls' hairbands should be blue and those with pierced ears should wear only small, plain gold or silver studs. Please will parents check hair for nits.

On behalf of all of the staff and Governors of Vinehall, I wish you a happy and prosperous 2010. We look forward to another busy year packed with opportunities for your children and we wish you and your extended family the very best for the year ahead and all that it brings.

Yours sincerely



J Robinson
Head