

23 October 2009

Dear Parent

This term's earlier pick-up at 5.20 pm has worked very well indeed for the Prep School and I am grateful to all parents who have collected so promptly. The days have been drawing in recently and we look forward to turning the clocks back over half term. The children are ready for a rest before the exciting lead-up to Christmas.

Uniform

The children all revert to winter uniform after half term. Please ensure that you have a full set of uniform, named clearly. Please take the opportunity to give your child what Mr Whitehead would call a "thorough" haircut over half term.

Medical

Please check your child's hair for nits before returning him/her to school after half term. If you are concerned about vaccination or any health matter, please call Sister Victoria at school on 01580 883096.

Calendar

Tickets should be booked for school plays and subscription concerts coming up across the second half of term. Your ticket numbers will be emailed back to you in the same way as last term. I enclose further information about our Carol Service (parking is always an issue so please do read the instructions carefully). Please note the dates of Bonfire Night, the Friends of Vinehall Christmas fair, our Gift Service (to which children are invited to bring unwrapped gifts), Year 8 Dinner, plays and other events as advertised in the Calendar. In readiness for the Staff and Year 8 Christmas Dinner, the matrons will be organising a fitting for boarding boys, for their suits. If you do not wish for your son to be fitted please let the Matrons know.

Pre-Prep

A separate letter is enclosed from Mrs Richardson

Sport

The rugby season will start on 12 November and all boys will need to ensure that they have changed their boot studs accordingly. Rugby studs are usually metal and have a domed top to prevent cuts in contact. The school shop has a supply and most sports shops will sell this type of studs (£3 for 12 approximately). Junior boys with moulded studs do not need to worry; their boots are usually harmless and unlikely to cause any damage. Likewise, boots with blades are usually safe although occasionally the edges can get quite rough and need smoothing down. A boot stud and mouthguard check will be made at the start of the season. Boys will only be allowed to play rugby if they are properly equipped.

Saturday School

We had a tremendous response to our Saturday School questionnaire and this was the main focus of the Parents Forum on Tuesday, 20 October, notes from which have been attached to *Vinelines* this week and will be lodged on our website. A decision about Saturday school for next academic year and the near future will be confirmed at our next Governors' meeting in November and I will inform parents in due course.

Gifted and Talented

We are keen to celebrate the successes of all our pupils whether here or outside School. Please do inform me in writing if your child has particular interests and talents, with a note of any particular achievements. Such information is extremely useful when we are preparing references for senior schools.

Academic

We are not expecting our children to spend the half term working or revising. They should have a good break. Year 8 pupils might find it helpful to do some work and 8D will be set some tasks but otherwise there is no pressure on the children to work through their half term.

After School Activities

If your child attends an activity after school such as tennis, swimming or judo please could you ensure that they bring a suitable snack to school which they can eat before the activity starts. This will help to keep them going until they get home.

Junior Play: 'Red Riding Hood'

It would be helpful if Year 4 pupils could practise their lines for the play during half term so that they know much of their role by heart by the time they return to school. Children should bring their scripts to school every day.

Review

You will find enclosed a complimentary copy of the latest school review magazine. Further copies are available from the school office. We hope that you will enjoy sharing the review with your extended family and friends.

DVD

Mr Robinson and Jack Davies, former Gapper, are responsible for the new Vinehall dvd, a copy of which is enclosed. This is an in-house publication providing a flavour of Vinehall life and we hope that you will enjoy sharing it with friends. Further copies are freely available from the school office so please do collect more if needed.

Sponsored Walk

Thanks to your generosity and support of sponsorship for our walk at the beginning of term, we have exceeded £3000 in total. Anyone still wishing to make a donation may leave a cheque (payable to Rwanda Aid) in the front office.

Minibuses

If your child is not attending school one day and usually travels in the minibus it is important that you ensure that you have informed the driver directly and the office as well, if possible, thus avoiding delays and confusion.

Near misses on A21

We have been told of one accident and another near miss involving parents waiting to turn off the A21 into the school drive during this month alone and we are aiming to persuade those responsible to improve the warning signs on the approach to the entrance.

Balfour Beatty Ltd is responsible for managing the trunk road in East Sussex on behalf of the Highways Agency and the initial response has been to state that, following a speed limit review on the A21, they have not identified a need for any improvement works to be undertaken. We do not intend to leave it there but should you wish to add your concerns it might be helpful if you were to either write to: Joanna Rickwood, Customer Care Officer, Balfour Beatty Ltd, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 0TT or email: Area4@interroutejv.co.uk. You may also wish to write to your local MP who is bound to be sympathetic!

Parental Support

We are very fortunate indeed to have a wonderfully supportive Friends of Vinehall Committee along with class representatives to aid communication between school and parents. Thank you for all your help with special events such as our Harvest Festival collection. We are looking forward to the bonfire night straight after half term.

Vinelines

For weekly news updates, please check *Vinelines* which is available by email and on the school website on Fridays in term-time. I am always happy to hear of Vinehall family news to add to *Vinelines*.

With best wishes for an enjoyable half term break. Boarders are expected back at bedtime on Wednesday, 4 November and the first full day back for day pupils will be Thursday 5 November.

Yours sincerely

Julie Robinson
Head