

Headteacher's Letter to Parents: November 2011

Dear Parent

We have settled back into the Autumn Term well, despite the clock changes and the ever increasing darkness. This half term is an incredibly important one academically for your daughters. Many students will be building up to mock exams and indeed public exams. We offer a range of activities and services to help the students deal with the pressures of their academic life; that said, there can be no compensation for hard work and the routine of doing homework and revision on an on-going and systematic basis. Please do encourage your daughters to continue with their established routines and to strike a balance. Their Heads of School will be writing under separate cover with more details on how this can be achieved and with the key dates and exams facing them. We know that natural ability is nothing if not combined with consistent revision, review and hard work. We work hard to ensure that there are many other opportunities for our students in school to relax and have a break from their academic work. Do encourage your daughter to join a club and to get involved in the extra-curricular aspects of school life.

Celebration of Music and Teaching

If you have read the most recent copy of High Flyer you will be aware that Mrs Cornall, our Director of Music, had a busy half term. She gave her first ever radio interview, highlighting the musical talents of Wycombe High School students, and the other skills and talents developed through the performing arts by all students, not just the performers. She was able to play a range of music sang and played by our students. This was broadcast on Marlow 97.5 FM.

I am delighted to report that Mrs Cornall's media debut and fame has gathered further momentum. We are delighted to announce that she has been awarded the **Classic FM Secondary Music Teacher of the Year Award**. Mrs Cornall received her award last night (Monday 7 November) at the Royal Albert Hall, where the Music For Youth, School Proms were being held. She was presented the award on stage by Mr Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education. We have been sworn to secrecy up to this point; although I gather Facebook pages have been buzzing with the news for weeks! I am grateful to Gaby Haynes in Year 10 (Nightingale 2) for nominating Mrs Cornall and making this happen.

Mrs Cornall has been responsible for Music at Wycombe High School for 14 years and in that time Wycombe High Students have been fortunate to perform in a variety of concerts and events including musical theatre, classical concerts, operas and ensembles. As you will be aware every year Mrs Cornall organises a music tour allowing approximately one hundred girls to travel to a European country and perform concerts to members of the public. This provides an unforgettable adventure for girls across all year groups, giving them a flavour of what life as a professional musician is like. Many of them take part in this trip several times during their Wycombe High School career. As one of her students says: "**Mrs Cornall has become Classic FM Secondary School Music Teacher of the Year for the simple reason that, in the eyes of anyone who knows her, she is simply a legend**". Mrs Cornall inspires our students to take part in music and the performing arts from the moment they join the school, whether as performers or as part of the technical teams, production, makeup, wardrobe, sales and marketing teams, or simply watching and supporting. Last October Mrs Cornall directed 5 local schools in a performance of Oklahoma; ensuring music was at the core of young people's lives in High Wycombe.

The schools involved were Wycombe High (of course), Great Marlow, John Hampden Grammar, Royal Grammar and St Bernard's. This year Wycombe High School has a wide range of musical activities including an evening of musical theatre, a jazz picnic and Haydn's Creation (full details and dates are attached to this letter).

Play Your Part

It is fitting that Mrs Cornall has achieved this award in the year that Wycombe High School has launched a major fundraising campaign to raise money for a new performing arts centre. Wycombe High School students are high attaining, well qualified and hard working. They are able to perform well under pressure and can juggle many competing demands: the very skills that universities and employers are seeking. We support our students, your daughter, to develop these academic skills, so she can choose to be whatever she wants to be. We ensure doors are opened to our students and few are closed. We know many will go to university; all will be employees. We hope many will be the next generation of leaders; and many will be parents.

Yet their academic success is only one part of their story. Wycombe High School cares just as much, if not more, about the other aspects of our students' development: the aspects that build confidence, self-esteem, team work, enterprise skills, communications skills, and innovation. These are key parts of any Wycombe High School student. These are the other skills that employers and universities value; these are the skills that will make your daughter stand out from the crowd; that will help her to be a good citizen, a good friend, a good neighbour; the skills that will ensure she is a success in her chosen field.

We build these skills in a variety of ways; but most specifically we build them through our extra-curricular provision: for example sport, drama, dance, and music and performing arts as described above. Over the years we have invested in our academic and sporting facilities, whilst our performing arts facilities have been ignored, despite almost every student being involved in the performing arts in some way throughout her career at Wycombe High School. She may be a performer or a back stage hand, a technician, part of the sales and marketing team, or watching and supporting her peers at our many events.

We are now launching a major fundraising campaign to support the required upgrade to our performing arts facilities and we all need to 'Play our Part' for this campaign to be a success. New facilities will not only benefit your daughter, but will be an invaluable addition for the local community, providing a much needed venue for music, drama and dance rehearsals and performances. We are already a local hub for many external community organisations; this will enable us to support our wider community even further.

Should you be inspired by Mrs Cornall's success, and thus the success of Wycombe High students and the whole school, please do consider supporting us financially. I attach a donor form. We know we cannot achieve our **target of £1.5 million** without you.

Emergency Contact / Bad Weather Procedures

As the weather is very sadly darkening and deteriorating, may I remind you that any information related to bad weather will be posted on our own website [Wycombe High School](#) and the Local Authority's website. Our website will be updated from 7.00 am. This is the earliest we can give an accurate update - we rely on information about school transport to be provided by the Local Authority and the timescales are designed to reflect this service. The County's website is: [Buckinghamshire County Council - Homepage](#)

Staff News

I know you will join me in congratulating Mrs Su Chamberlain and Mrs Jonsmyth-Clarke on the births of their babies. Mrs Chamberlain is now the proud mother of baby Charlotte and Mrs Jonsmyth-Clarke has welcomed Noah to the world. Babies and Mothers are doing extremely well; and indeed little Charlotte and Noah have already made their first visit to Wycombe High School.

Parents and Friends Association (PAFA)

PAFA are hosting a Frost Fayre on Thursday 17 November - from 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm in the Forum and School Hall. Please do put this date in your diary now and bring friends and family along for a great evening of eating, drinking and buying presents and treats for the forthcoming festive season. This event is a wonderful one; enjoyed by students and parents alike. Do support us.

Uniform

Our uniform policy is on our website: <http://www.whs.bucks.sch.uk/parents-governors/uniform>. Please do note it has been updated to add more clarity about shoes and skirts / trousers and our expectations for uniform at events / activities outside of school. Once again please be aware that only a medium-sized plain dark rucksack may be used as a school bag. Our uniform and dress codes set the tone for our community and provide the scaffolding for high standards in every aspect of school life. It takes a lot of energy and time to monitor uniform and we are diligent; this is only achievable if we are supported by parents. I would be grateful for your on-going support in ensuring that your daughter fully complies with our expectations. Uniform infringements do result in a variety of sanctions including detentions, loss of privileges and potentially exclusion. Recognising that students need to be treated differently at different stages, the uniform rules become less strict as our students move through the year groups; for example in Year 11 the students, once a month, wear their own clothes in preparation for Sixth Form. And of course in the Sixth Form we do not have a uniform. In this sense our uniform rules are already very liberal compared to many schools.

Free School Meals

Please do consider whether your daughter is eligible for Free School Meals. If you are in receipt of any of the qualifying benefits listed below and have not already submitted an application to us, please complete the attached form and ask your daughter to return it our Receptionist, marked for the attention of Mrs Andrea Paskins.

Under current regulations a family is eligible if a parent/carer is in receipt of any of the following:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA(IB))
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA (IR))
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), provided you do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £16,190 (please note that this figure is for April 2011 and that it changes in April each year)
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit (GE)

And finally....

I know Mrs Cornall would appreciate your personal messages of congratulations. This is a major achievement – a once in a life time experience. And one that reflects positively on our entire community. Well done Mrs Cornall. We are proud of you and our students.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S N Cromie
Headteacher

LETTER TO PARENTS – COMMENT SLIP

November 2011

Please return this slip to the box in Reception

Daughter's Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____ Learning /
Year Group: _____

My comments on Mrs Cromie's letter:

My name (please print): _____

Email address: _____

Signature _____

Date _____