

## Headteacher's Letter to Parents: January 2012

Dear Parent

### General

I wish you a healthy and happy New Year; and hope you have had a good break and a restful holiday. We start the Spring Term, as is traditional, in a very focused way with exams. Year 11s and 10s are doing their mocks and of course public AS, A2 and GCSE modules have commenced. I wish every student well. As highlighted in the December edition of High Flyer hard work and revision are essential: we are grateful for your support and your encouragement of your daughter at this time. As we look forward, I would remind you that should your daughter be taking public exams this year please be mindful of unforeseen circumstances. Examination Boards do not re-schedule examinations because of unforeseen circumstances, for example severe weather or volcanic ash. Recent experience suggests that parents and students would be well advised to avoid booking holidays abroad during the Easter and May half-term holidays i.e. immediately preceding an examination period. We also recommend that students have a back-up plan in place in the event of severe weather conditions, including alternative plans for travelling to and from school and accommodation with a friend or family member, close to school. In the event of wide spread unforeseen circumstances please check our website for updates and further information.

### Staffing

We are joined this term by:

- Mr Michael Jones, Teacher of Biology. Mr Jones is replacing Mrs Jane Wheeler who retired at Christmas. Mr Jones joins us from Christchurch, New Zealand and will be with us for two terms. Mrs Wheeler worked at Wycombe High School for 12 years; we wish her the very best for her retirement
- Mrs Valerie Catalagac will be the acting Subject Leader of Biology for the remainder of this academic year
- Mr Steven Van der Ros, Teacher of Mathematics. Mr Van der Ros is covering Mrs Rachel Walter's maternity leave. Mr Van der Ros comes to us from Brisbane, Australia
- Miss Tasha Saint-Smith, Teacher of P.E, joins us from Tring School. Miss Saint-Smith is replacing Mrs Anna Baxter (who left us at Christmas to take up a position as Head Swimming Coach in the private sector). Miss Saint-Smith will be with us for one term in the first instance.

### Facilities

This term we are upgrading our Sixth Form Centre (the Miller building). New windows and doors are being put in place and the building will have the old brown cladding replaced with a more modern product. These improvements will make a significant difference to heat control in the Sixth Form and transform the learning environment. The building is currently surrounded by scaffolding; careful plans are in place to ensure health and safety is maintained throughout the two months it is expected to complete the transformation.

### Play Your Part

I am delighted to report that our fundraising campaign for a new music centre has got off to an extremely positive start. We have raised almost £100k since September alone. We are currently calculating the total raised to date and more information will follow shortly. I am hugely grateful to everyone who has made this possible, but mindful that we need to raise £1.5 million in total – so some way to go before we can start to

build in the Summer of 2013. Building a new music centre is the first stage of, indeed the catalyst for, a series of school improvements. By rehusing the Music department, we can refurbish the old music block to create new drama, dance and sixth form classrooms. We will also be able to upgrade our School Hall, which is currently almost in 100% usage as a teaching space for the performing arts. The 'Play Your Part' campaign will in time benefit every girl in the school in some way. Indeed almost every girl in the school is involved in some capacity with the arts and performing arts at Wycombe High School, whether as a performer, creator or on the technical side helping with production, lighting, marketing and sales. Such activities help develop the whole person and provide the very skills that universities and employers require in addition to academic qualifications (for example planning, creativity, team work, problem solving, and resilience).

Please support us to further upgrade our school site and facilities – it will not be possible without you. Government funding is very limited and often restricted to essential maintenance. If we do not try and do this for ourselves, the school will quite simply stand still. I attach a donor form should you feel able to make a financial contribution.

### **Other Pleas for Help**

On 22 February Miss Lee, Teacher of Spanish, will be running a 'Cultural Fair'. This is part of a wider initiative to celebrate diversity at Wycombe High School in order to improve global awareness. Miss Lee is looking for donations for a raffle that is planned as part of the Fair. If you feel you could donate any items that link with the theme of the event and that celebrate world cultures, Miss Lee would be delighted to hear from you. Please email her using [office@whs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@whs.bucks.sch.uk). Suitable donations might include for example clothing, national symbols, pictures, dolls, musical instruments etc. All proceeds will go to our 'Play Your Part' campaign and our nominated annual charities (this year Horizons and Ethiopia Links).

Miss Faye Gould is in desperate need of a parent with a van or truck who would be willing to collect some scenery for our forthcoming drama production. We are hiring the set; unfortunately the transportation of it will cost us almost £800. If you feel you could help out please contact Miss Gould on [office@whs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@whs.bucks.sch.uk). The production is 'Daisy Pulls It Off' and it will run on Thursday 1 March and Friday 2 March. The set is required before the February half term.

### **Parent Conferences**

The two Parent Conferences held last term on alcohol and internet safety were very well received. Our conferences continue this term on the following dates and topics:

- Monday 23 January: The Power of Praise – bringing out the best in your daughter
- Thursday 2 February: Nurturing Independence, Responsibility and Resilience
- Tuesday 13 March: Being an Assertive Parent

These conferences are being delivered by Parenting Matters, a local team of practitioners who have experience and expertise in coaching parents. The sessions will help you to explore ways to:

- Keep the lines of communication open with your daughter
- Connect better with your daughter
- Avoid unnecessary confrontation
- Encourage and motivate
- Help your daughter learn to be responsible, resilient and independent
- Set clear boundaries and use consequences in a fair and constructive way

Mrs Andrea Jacobson our Director of Learners has written to you under separate cover with details on how you can sign up for these events. We very much look forward to welcoming you to them.

### **Wainwright Learning Centre**

Our Learning Centre is open between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. Our Reception closes at 4.15 pm. In September we changed our Learning Centre rules to permit students to keep mobile phones switched on (silent mode only) - between 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm. If you are collecting your daughter from school after school hours please do not come to the Wainwright Learning Centre to find her, but send her a text message

from the front car park to let her know that you are waiting. Please do also collect your daughter promptly at 6.00 pm. The site is locked and lights are turned off at that time; it is not safe for your daughter to be waiting in school for collection beyond this time.

### **Vehicular access to the school site**

Because it is not possible to entirely segregate students from vehicular movement on the school site, we ask that parents do not drive on to the school site without prior permission between 8.00 am and 9.00 am in the morning and between 3.15 pm and 4.00 pm in the afternoon. However, despite numerous requests, there is a small minority of parents who continue to drive on to our site during these times. Should you have extenuating circumstances that require it (for example a medical reason), do let us know and we will, as we always do, work with you to make this possible. Otherwise I would be grateful for your support in ensuring the safety of all our students. I would also be grateful if, when dropping a student off on the site (at times when cars are permitted access), parents would park in the marked bays and not in the roadway – there is a particularly high incidence of this amongst parents of Sixth Form parents attempting to drop their daughters as close to Miller as possible. Please only use the marked bays.

### **Admissions for 2013**

Our draft Admissions Policy for 2013 is available on both the School and County websites. Please follow the hyperlink to the appropriate section of the school website: [Policies & Procedures](#). In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the School is consulting on the policy until 1 March 2012. Any feedback or comments relating to this policy during this period should be emailed to [office@whs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@whs.bucks.sch.uk) with the header 'Admissions feedback'. The policy remains similar to the admissions policy for 2012.

### **And finally**

I look forward to working with you and your daughters over this next term. A reminder that should we experience further adverse weather conditions, the following procedures will be followed:

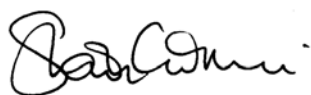
- Closure of the school will be announced on the County website: <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk>
- The school website <http://www.whs.bucks.sch.uk> will be updated with details of the closure and further information as it becomes available
- There will be an answerphone message on the school telephone number explaining that the school is closed to students
- Students should check Moodle and use any time, as far as possible, for school work

Additionally, please note that Buckinghamshire BBC Three Counties Radio broadcasts schools closures and extensive travel news on 94.7 FM (Central Bucks), 98 FM (South Bucks) and 104.5 FM (North Bucks). Links to the BCC website can also be found at [www.bbc.co.uk/threecounties](http://www.bbc.co.uk/threecounties).

Each tutor group will have an emergency contact list that will be activated by the form tutor in circumstances other than those described above. If the school is closed to students, due to adverse weather or other emergencies, no absence note is required on return to school.

Once again Happy New Year and best wishes for 2012.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S N Cromie  
Headteacher

**LETTER TO PARENTS – COMMENT SLIP**

**January 2012**

**Please return this slip to the box in Reception**

Daughter's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

My comments on Mrs Cromie's letter:

My name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_