

Tuesday, 14 September 2010

Dear Parents,

A very warm welcome back to the new academic year at WGS and I hope that you and your family enjoyed a peaceful, relaxing, summer. It's great to see the boys and girls in school again and most tell me they are thrilled to be back!

Examinations

Students in Years 11 and 13 probably had an anxious few weeks as they awaited their examination results but they need not have worried since results were very impressive this year. At A Level, 75% of examinations were passed at A/B grade with about 50% at A and the new A* grade. More importantly, and despite all the concerns in the media about thousands of students being without a University place, over 90% of the Upper Sixth achieved their first or second choice University and, of the handful remaining, all bar one made it through clearing - unfortunately one student missed the summer examinations through illness and will have to take A2s this year.

At GCSE, new school records were set by Year 11 as they achieved a 69% pass rate at A*/A grade – thereby beating the school's previous best of 65% set in 1999. Seven students achieved 10 A* passes each, making us the third in the Independent schools' regional list. It was good news too, for Years 10 and 12 – Year 10 achieved promising grades in their GCSE modules and the AS results were up on last year's scores. Of course, the job is only half done but these are encouraging results on which the students can now build.

Buildings

And, speaking of building, our Bursar, Simon Jones and the Estates team have worked like Trojans over the holiday:

- The Sports Hall has been repainted throughout
- Following requests from the Student Parliament, the toilets in the Derry Building and the John Roper room have been completely refurbished.
- The Derry cloakroom has also transformed with a new floor and ceiling
- The small DT workshop has been converted into a smashing new facility for Cadcam work, our new laser cutter, and interactive whiteboard – all courtesy of a grant from the Wolfson Foundation
- The piece de resistance, however, is the new Language Suite. Out of the old, empty, PE/Art block has been created a superb new facility for languages – with five classrooms and an IT suite

Many thanks to Simon and his team who completed all of this work on time and on budget. They now move into the Hallmark building which will be converted from Languages into our new Junior School – WGJS. Thus, by January the first Head of WGJS, Mr Andrew Hymer (currently Deputy at King's, Hawford in Worcester), will be able to show prospective students for Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 around our new school which will open in September 2011.

Staff News

Our new teachers are settling in well.

- Mr Payne (English), Mrs Burden (Music), Mrs Peat (p/t Music), Miss Wilcox (p/t maternity cover PE), Mme Keita (French Assistant)

And a number of staff have taken on new roles:

- Mrs Dyer (formerly Miss Munden) is Head of Year 7. She will also take over Year 8 for two terms in January
- Mr Hall is Head of Year 9
- Dr Hinchliffe is now Head of Sixth Form with Mr Crust joining Mrs Preston as assistant Head of Sixth
- Mr Benfield is taking up the reins as Head of the English department

Inspection

As I've mentioned in previous letters, since our last full Inspection was in January 2007, we are due an interim Inspection, probably before the end of term. The school will receive 48 hours notice for an Inspection that will be conducted over two days. Parents will be asked to complete a confidential online questionnaire to help the Inspectors form their judgements of the school. More details will be provided by the Inspectors when they contact the school.

Communication

As you know, we've been trying to update our lines of communication with families and the issue was one of the recommendations from the Kirkland Rowell survey of parents.

Unfortunately, we've found it very difficult to get everyone's email address and so blanket email communication remains an issue. Fortunately, we do have mobile telephone numbers for almost everyone and we propose to introduce a text messaging service – including Year specific ones such as reminders for Parents' Evenings, alongside whole school messages regarding snow, starts of term etc. However, before we can begin this service, we need to know if there is anyone who does not wish to receive text messages from school. So, if you don't, please complete and return the opt-out tear off slip overleaf. Please also complete the tear-off slip if you do **not** wish a photograph of your daughter/son to appear in any school publications or the website.

As always, I close my letter with an invitation to all parents to contact me with any thoughts, ideas or views they have on any aspect of school life. My telephone number and email address are printed at the foot of the first page.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Darby
Head

Some Key Dates

Finally, a few dates for your diary – (hopefully you’ve already received the full calendar for this term).

Saturday	11 th	September	10.00am	OW Sports Festival (all welcome)
Thursday	16 th	September	5.00pm	Work Experience Evening (for Year 11 parents)
Wednesday	22 nd	September	7.00pm	Junior Prizegiving – Invitations already out
Thursday	30 th	September	7.00pm	GCSE Information Evening for Year 10 parents
Saturday	2 nd	October	10.00 – 3pm	Open Day
Wednesday	6 th	October	7.00pm	Lower Sixth Information Evening for Parents
Tuesday	12 th	October	7.00pm	<i>Big Six</i> Parents' Evening
Friday	15 th October – Sun 31 st October			Half term including Year 8 Hockey tour, Italian Trip - Rome and Classics Trip – Pompeii
Thursday	4 th	November	5.00pm	Year 11 Parents' Evening
Friday	5 th	November		Founder's Day – No afternoon school
Thursday	18 th	November	5.00pm	Year 8 Parents' Evening
Tuesday	23 rd	November	5.00pm	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Tuesday & Wednesday	7 th & 8 th	December	7.30pm	Christmas Carol Concerts

***OPRO gum-shields** - The dentist will be coming in to school on Wednesday 15th September at 9:30am to fit **OPRO gum-shields**. Any parent who wishes to know more about these gum-shields should speak with Mr Anderson (Deputy Head) or contact the General Office to get a leaflet: if you then wish your child to see the dentist please fill in the form or access their website.

OPT OUT FORM

I do not wish to receive text messages from the school.*

I do not wish my son or daughter to be used for publicity by the school*

*please tick if appropriate

Name (please print clearly)

Parent of Form

Signed Date

Please return this form to your son/daughter's form tutor by Friday 17th September



Inspiring excellence since 1512

QUINCENTENARY 1512-2012

- The Development Committee, a new branch of Student Parliament, has been considering the celebrations for the school's Quincentenary. Inspired by the success of the millennium tie, there is a competition looming to design a new tie for the occasion. We welcome designs (even multiple), from everyone with a connection to the school and would like to encourage students, parents, teachers, friends and Old Wulfrunians to take part. Attached to this sheet is an initial template for designs, more can be printed from the Student Parliament section on the Frog Virtual Learning Platform (wgs-sch.net) or you can create your own on additional sheets of paper. Completed designs should be sent to the General Office addressed to Development Committee by Friday 15th October. It could be your idea that is selected, so please start designing now (and don't forget to include your name and address!).
- The Tie should be based on the school's colours i.e. Red/Black/Silver or white
- The school badge/crest may be used
- You may or may not wish to include the dates 1512-2012 or 2012 or Quincentenary