



Wimbledon College

Head Master's Half Term Letter to Parents

Friday 20th October 2017

Dear Parents

I am pleased to start this letter by informing you that our Progress 8 measure based on our 2017 GCSE results is an outstanding 0.47. To put this in context the national average for all pupils this year is 0.0 and the national average for boys is -0.24. What this means is that on average each pupil achieved half a grade higher than what was expected of them in all of their subjects. Even more impressive is that the boys who joined us with lower KS2 scores achieved a P8 score of 0.7. It is also very pleasing that the vast majority of these boys have chosen to stay with us into Sixth Form. The ten boys with the highest progress scores are Mahiro Suzuki-Baronowski, Joe O'Grady, Max Berge, Taras Galyuk, Adam Bennett, Jamie O'Connor, Tom Walsh, Daniel Young-McHugh, Matthew Hazim and Benith Edward. Congratulations to all of the boys who did so well in their GCSEs.

It is a fantastic achievement and sits within Merton's overall achievement of having the highest local authority score in the country.

Another success this year has been the number of Rhetoric pupils moving on to University and apprenticeships. Over 80% of boys have taken up university places.

This half term has been a successful one with a tremendous amount going on in and out of the classroom. Our new boys in Figures have made an excellent start to their College career and have involved themselves fully in the life of the school. They are exhibiting all of the values that we expect of Wimbledon College pupils. Similarly boys who have joined us in higher years and in Sixth Form have become well established. I hope that they have a good break over half term and return with the same positive approach.

Boys return to school on Tuesday 31st October, as Monday 30th is a staff training day.

Sixth Form Open Evening

Our Sixth Form open evening takes place on Wednesday 8th November from 5.00pm until 8.00pm, with talks at 5.00pm, 6.00pm and 7.30pm. It is a joint evening with the Ursuline High School and this year it is being held at Wimbledon College. I would encourage all Syntax boys and their parents to attend the evening as it will provide invaluable information about the College Sixth Form. To ensure that boys have the opportunity to speak to staff we will be asking boys to attend at specific times during the evening.

Staff Farewell

Sadly we say farewell to Vanessa Gallagher at the end of this half term. She has been at the College for ten years and has been indispensable in her role as Examinations Officer. Much of her work goes on behind the scenes however her attention to detail and hard work has ensured that our exams have run smoothly over the years. She has supported so many of your sons prior to and after their public exams as well as in her other role as a first aider. We wish her well in her new career at Maynooth University in Ireland.

Grade Card

Your son's report card is being given to him today (for years 7 -11). On it you will see the average grade for each of his subjects for this half term. When comparing your son's grades with his target grade please bear in mind that the target is where he should be at the end of the academic year. At the beginning of the year, grades may be slightly below target grades but as the year progresses assessments should generally meet or exceed target grades. Individual grades are available to you on the *Schoolgateway*.

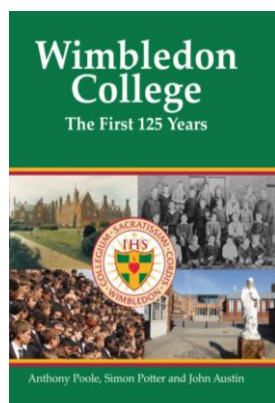
All assessments use the College 1 to 9 grade scale for years 7-10. The College 1 to 9 grade scale is also used for subjects in Syntax (year 11) apart from boys studying Business Studies and Resistant Materials who will be assessed using A*-G grades.

A number of set changes in a variety of subjects will come into effect after the half term break and boys affected will be informed of them on their return. If you have any concerns about your son's target grades, or about his progress in general, please do not hesitate to get in touch with his Head of Line.

Online Safety - Parent Information Evening

As part of our ongoing efforts to keep our students safe, we are delighted to be able to offer a free online safety talk for parents. The challenges that we all face in keeping boys safe online continue to increase and I hope that the talk will help you as parents support your sons. The talk is being given by Derek Crabtree, who specialises in internet safety and data protection. It will take place in the **Wimbledon College main hall from 7-8pm on Tuesday 31st October 2017**. All are welcome, but places are limited, so please do not hesitate to sign up through School Gateway.

Wimbledon College - The First 125 Years



The history of the College, written by three former members of staff, is still available to purchase from the school via SchoolGateway. It was written to mark the College's 125th Anniversary and gives an excellent account of the College's origins and growth. It contains a wide variety of interesting information about the events, people and indeed the buildings that make the College what it is today. The price is £25 a copy. Order forms are available on the College website.



We also have a number of other items available including the College umbrella and cufflinks. The cost of the umbrella is £25.

College Twitter accounts

Our various twitter accounts are an excellent way of keeping in touch with what is going on in school and they are updated regularly. If you have not done so already please consider following us on one or more of these accounts. The accounts we have are as follows:

@Wimb_Coll (main school account)

@Wimb_Coll_Rugby

@Wimb_Coll_Music

@Wimb_Coll_Chap (Chaplaincy)

@Wimb_Coll_Art

I would like to emphasise that all essential information will still be communicated to you via SchoolGateway and the school website.

Friends of Wimbledon College

As a school we are very grateful for the support that we receive from the Friends – parents who are willing to give time to support school activities and coordinate fundraising events. I am conscious that FOWC can only function effectively if there are enough parents who are willing to give their time and energy to such events.

The Cheese and Wine evening held this half term was a tremendous success, with a large number of parents socialising together, while raising money for the College. Without FOWC it would not have taken place.

I ask that you consider whether you can spare some time to support both FOWC and the College. The next whole school event where they are looking for support is to help serve refreshments at the annual Christmas carol service on Monday evening the 18th of December. Again, if you can assist us, please email FOWC - friendsofwimbledoncollege@gmail.com.

Bicycle Safety - cycle helmets

The number of boys who are cycling to school has increased this year and I hope that the number will continue to increase. I am concerned however that only a small number of those cycling wears a helmet. I would be grateful if all parents of boys who cycle to school would insist that their son wear a helmet. There is clear evidence that wearing a helmet reduces injuries to cyclists involved in accidents. I want boys to be as safe as possible on the way to school.

In addition to this I would ask that boys who are going to cycle to school over the winter months wear an item of high visibility clothing when they are cycling.

Unacceptable hair cuts

There have been a number of boys who have come to school this term with haircuts where they have had their heads shaved at the back and sides and then left the hair on the top of their heads extremely long. This style is not acceptable.

Similarly we have the expectation that boys are clean shaven when at school. We have had to speak to a number of boys who have not been clean shaven.

I would be very grateful if you would support the school in these matters and talk to your sons about the College's expectations [all pupils and parents have received this previously].

The paragraph relating to haircuts and shaving is as follows:

Hair should be clean, tidy and in a style which is in keeping with the formality of school life. Shaved heads, long hair below the collar or in the eyes, dyed hair, tramlines, stepped and ridged haircuts, patterns, shaved sides and shaved eyebrows are not acceptable. Boys are to be clean-shaven.

Rugby

Once again the College's rugby teams have been excellently supported by numerous boys throughout the College. This half term has seen more fixtures than ever as we continue to offer the boys a challenging and competitive environment to develop their knowledge and understanding of the game. We have also been able to include more teams than last year due to the popularity of the sport and the commitment and dedication the boys continue to show.

On the pitch our success has been mixed but still extremely encouraging, having played 96, Won 47, Drawn 4 but sadly, Lost 45. An overall win percentage of 48%. These fantastic results have also included both our Senior 1st XV and the U15s progressing through to the last 32 in the country of their respective National Schools Cup. A brilliant achievement and one that we are all extremely proud of. Both teams have their next round of matches just after half term with the 1st XV playing Hampton (away) on the 8th November, KO 2.15 & the U15s against St Paul's on Thursday 6th November, KO tbc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those parents who continue to support our boys and the College by providing such brilliant hospitality and support to all those involved on a Saturday. Without your help we really would not be able to provide the level of opportunity that many schools are envious of.

Football - Spring Term

Our teams are already playing fixtures in their Surrey Cup competitions and all year groups will be playing their second round fixtures after half term. The First XI are also competing in the Catholic Cup against St Dominic's Sixth Form College.

Mr Barnes is making a request for any parents who would be interested in supporting their son's teams, once the regular fixtures commence after Christmas, by assisting with Saturday morning refreshments to contact him. If you are interested would you please email him on his school email - barry.barnes@wimbledoncollege.org.uk

Wimbledon BookFest - October 2017

Students from Figures and Rudiments had the fantastic opportunity of meeting Louis de Bernieres at Wimbledon BookFest this year. He was there to talk about his brilliant new book 'Blue Dog'. The boys enjoyed his tales of Australia, where the book is set, and how he was inspired; they certainly had plenty of questions to ask him at the end.



Later on that same day, Lower Grammar headed down to the Common to an extremely informative and fascinating talk led by Tracy Chevalier, author of books such as 'The Girl with the Pearl Earring' and 'New Boy'. After the talk, the students were very keen to read the latter which is a modern adaptation of 'Othello'.

Later on in the same week, the Syntax students also benefitted from Wimbledon BookFest as they got involved in an interactive workshop focused on Shakespeare and 'Macbeth' which was led by a professor from the University of Roehampton. Syntax students found the workshop academically stimulating and all agreed that it would be very useful for their GCSE English Literature exam.

Congratulations go to Jakub Wiak who was one of the winners of the BookFest schools competition and who will now have his piece published in the BookFest anthology.

Forthcoming Music events

I would like to bring your attention to two very different musical evenings that will be taking place next term. Both will be extremely enjoyable and I invite you to attend one or both of them. The first event is our **St Cecilia's Day concert** on 22nd November. This will be an

evening of choral and orchestra music, with the first part commencing at 7pm in the College chapel and the second at 8.15 in the College hall.

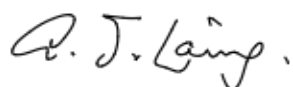
The second event is the **Battle of the bands** on 13th November. This will be a concert given by the various rock and pop bands in the school and will take place in Drama 1 at 6pm.

Carol Service

Our annual joint carol service with the Ursuline High School takes place this year on Monday 18th December at 8.00pm in Sacred Heart Church. The event is well attended and provides us with a spiritual dimension to our preparation for and celebration of Christmas. May I take this opportunity to invite you and your family to the service.

I hope that you all have an enjoyable half term break.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Laing,
Head Master