



Wimbledon College

Head Master's End of Term Letter to Parents

Friday 5 April 2019

Dear Parents

A very busy and successful term comes to an end with one group of pupils completing their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award and another setting off on their ski trip. A third group will over the holidays embark on a football tour to Italy. With all of the activity of the term it is appropriate that we finish with our Tenebrae service, where pupils and staff have the opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us all at his crucifixion, and to prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter itself.

As you are aware our Lenten collection this year has been in support of Christian Aid and their Lenten Campaign. Due to Cyclone Idai that hit Southern Africa and the devastation that it left behind we took the decision to split the money raised between the Lenten Campaign and the Emergency Appeal in response to the disaster. Currently we have raised well over £2000 and more money is to come in. There have been some very inventive and effective fundraising ideas from the boys and it is fantastic to see them working so positively to support others. Thank you all for the support that you have given.

Supporting GCSE, Year 12 and A level students

I am sure that you will be supporting your sons in their revision over the Easter holidays. While I appreciate that there has been a lot of discussion over the amount of time that pupils should spend revising during the holidays all I will say is that your son needs to have an established routine for revision, with suitable breaks for exercise. It is important to strike the correct balance and to make effective use of the time available. I hope that they will make good use of the holidays. They should also be planning their time at the beginning of next term in the build up to their examinations.

The examinations will be on them very soon, with Year 12 exams starting at the beginning of May, closely followed by the GCSEs and A Levels. All of the examination timetables are available on the College website. Please do take some time to look at these with your sons so that you know when their individual examinations are.

It is a demanding and stressful time for your sons, as I am sure that you are aware, and I encourage them to take advantage of all the support that they will be given by their teachers.

Pupil safety and dangerous behaviour

Unfortunately over the last three weeks I have had to respond to the behaviour of a small number of pupils that is unacceptable, illegal and dangerous for them and others. I need to make you aware of both and would be grateful if you take time over the Easter holidays to talk with your son[s] about them and the consequences of becoming involved.

The first is where boys have been approached, mainly through social media, asking for their debit cards along with their bank and personal details in return for an amount of money. What then happens is that money is laundered through their account by individuals or organised groups. The term being used for this is 'banging squares' and the term for bank details is 'deets'.

The consequences for knowingly giving your bank details to someone else for this purpose are high. Banks are aware of the activity and are closing accounts down. I must also point out that for younger pupils you as parents may have stood as guarantors for your sons. The identified individuals are then being flagged for a period of six years. In that time they are not able to obtain a bank account the consequences of which are obvious. Money laundering is a criminal offence with a high maximum sentence.

Unfortunately boys can be drawn in by the offer of money and do not consider the consequences of their actions. All of the Year groups have been spoken to in assembly to make them aware of the issue and the consequences of involving themselves in money laundering.

The second matter is that illegal drugs have been brought into school, with the intention of selling them. It is clear that boys have again been approached by individuals outside of school and become involved in what is illegal activity. While we do make pupils aware of the dangers of illegal drugs they are unfortunately easily available in society. Our school policy is very clear on illegal drugs and I will seek permanent exclusion for any pupil found in possession of illegal drugs in school or indeed in uniform on the way to and from school.

I am also aware that once individuals are caught up in either of the two activities they find it difficult to remove themselves from them. It was made clear in the assemblies last week that if boys have become caught up in them then they should seek help and speak to adults that they trust; yourselves, members of staff at the school, adults at youth groups, etc. They will be supported if they do this however if they do not and are found to be involved then the consequences are likely to be severe for them.

Working to help the environment - Reducing plastic waste at the College

Over the last year groups of students have been working on ideas to help our school community become more eco-friendly. One of the initiatives that students have developed has been to work towards stopping selling single use plastic bottles of water in our school refectory. [The boys have estimated that we sold over 70 000 single use plastic bottles last year]

After Easter we will be phasing out the sale of these bottles in the refectory, and instead will be encouraging students to buy a Wimbledon College branded reusable water bottle.

These will be available at a below cost price introductory offer of £2 until the first May bank holiday weekend, after that they will be sold at their usual price of £2.50 (this is still a huge reduction in their commercial value, due to the discount we have managed to secure through placing a large bulk order). The bottles are 650ml, BPA free, and leak proof. Bottles will be available to purchase for cash in school or paid for via School Gateway.

We are also installing additional drinking water taps at various points around the school over the Easter holiday to enable the boys to easily refill their bottles.

Mental Health Trailblazer Pilot

We are delighted to say that Wimbledon College has been chosen to be part of a cluster of local schools who will be taking part in a pilot scheme to test out new Government funded support for student mental health in schools. As part of this our staff will be receiving more training in Mental Health and we will be welcoming some newly trained mental health support workers, who will be coming into school to deliver evidence based interventions for students with mild to moderate issues. You will hear more from us about this project as it develops in the school.

The Mysteries

We have created an amazing production so that Wimbledon College can host a mystery cycle following the ancient English traditions of medieval Christian drama, in order to fully celebrate the miracle and mystery of Easter! A mystery cycle retells Christianity's story in full colour, spectacular revelation and, to be honest, the rude and raw reality of being fully human. It's funny, colourful and moving, staged as a promenade around the school.

They are being performed on Tuesday 23rd April at 7.00pm. Tickets for The Mysteries are now available to purchase on School Gateway and cost £3.00. If you do not have a school gateway account please apply for tickets by corresponding with kate.o'brien@wimbledoncollege.org.uk.

Music

I would like to draw your attention to two forthcoming events. The first is the annual House Music Competition which will take place on Thursday 16th May in the School Hall, at 6.00pm. Higher Line and Sixth Form musicians will compete against the winners of the Lower Line competition, which took place this week, for a variety of prizes. Please encourage your sons to participate in these competitions. Further information is available from Mr Thomas.

The second event is a joint choral and orchestral concert with the Ursuline High School which is taking place on the 8th of July at 7.00pm. We are returning to St John's Smith Square, the venue of our successful Anniversary celebration, for the concert. Tickets are £12 and £8 and are available from the St John's Smith Square box office. We look forward to seeing you at what promises to be an outstanding evening.

Rugby Sevens

As last year our Sevens season was affected by the weather however in the tournaments that were able to take place our teams were very successful with some brilliant performances along the way. All of the boys taking place were a credit to themselves and the College demonstrating their talents and abilities against very strong teams.

The most successful teams were the First VII, the U16s and the U14s. The Firsts reached three finals [out of four tournaments]; winning the Sussex Shield, runners up in the Surrey Schools Plate Final and quarter finalists in the National Schools Sevens. The U16 were victorious at the Queen Elizabeth Barnet Sevens, beating Whitgift and Brighton College in the process, and the U14s reached the Semi-Finals of the Reigate Sevens and the Quarter Finals of the National Schools Sevens

Our statistics for the season saw 89 games played with 61 wins [win percentage of 68%].

Always looking forward, the senior squad preseason training commences in the week beginning 1st July. All pupils in Year 11 and 12 are welcome to attend.

Football

Our football season is coming to a close and it is fantastic to see that the First XI have reached the semi-finals of both the Surrey Cup and the London Catholic Schools Cup. Both of these fixtures will be played at the start of next term. We wish them well.

Overall it has been a successful season with a number of outstanding fixtures. The combined winning percentage across the school is 58%.

Mr Barnes has asked me to pass on his thanks to all parents who have supported the boys and especially the parents who have prepared teas and refreshments on Saturday mornings, under the organisation of Mrs Marsh. Without this support the mornings would not be as successful as they have been this season.

Basketball

The success of our U13 team has continued and they are to be congratulated on reaching the Junior NBA Finals which take place at the end of April at UEL in Stratford. The boys, guided by their coach Roz Mason, have been excellent representatives of the College, winning their group and the play off matches to reach this stage of the competition. We wish them well.

Athletics

Sportshall Athletics

We have had two teams competing in this tournament this year. Our Year 8 team won their Merton Championships and progressed to the London Youth Games – South London Championships at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. Here the boys competed against teams from across South London in a very exciting match. In the end we came 6th.

The Year 7 Sportshall Athletics team came second in the '2019 Merton Schools Year 7 Sportshall Championship'. The Year 8 team went one better, and came away as victors in their championship!!!

Cross Country

Our friends at Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School invited us to participate in 'The Cardinal's Cup', a race that was held at at Wormwood Scrubs. A team of 18 boys competed with James Kennett achieving 2nd place in the Year 7 race.

Following the 'Merton Schools Cross Country Championships', thirteen boys from the College were selected to compete for Merton at the '2019 Surrey Schools Cross Country Championship'. The day was cold, and the course hilly! James Kennett featured strongly along with Diego Lister (Year 8).

Indoor Athletics

Teams from Years 7 - 10 competed in the '2019 Simmonds Cup Winter Championship' at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Edmonton. There were a number of outstanding performances with Michael Stephani (Year 10) being victorious in the Shot Putt. The College was ranked 6th overall.

Now we await the summer competitions, and we look forward to much more success!

Friends of Wimbledon College

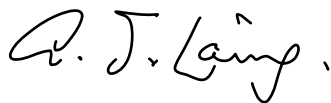
Friends of Wimbledon College will be holding their annual second-hand uniform sale on Saturday 15 June. To support this can I ask all parents for donations of clean, good-condition, second-hand school uniform and sports kit for the sale. Donations can be brought to school at any time and can be dropped off at reception. Please ensure that they are clearly marked 'For the attention of Friends of Wimbledon College'. Thank you.

I would also like to draw to your attention that Waitrose, in Raynes Park, has chosen Friends of Wimbledon College as one of its nominated charities for the month of April. This means that Waitrose will split £1000 between three local good causes or charities in the proportion chosen by customers. If you are shopping in Waitrose, Raynes Park, throughout April please vote for Friends of Wimbledon College by putting your green token in the FOWC box.

Summer Term

May I remind parents the Summer term starts on **Tuesday 23 April [Easter Tuesday]**.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Laing
Head Master