



Wimbledon College

Headteacher's End of Term Letter to Parents

Friday 22 December 2023

Dear Parents

We have come to the end of a very long term and I would like to commend and thank all of the pupils for their commitment to their studies and to the life of the school. Over the course of the term there have been numerous opportunities for the pupils to broaden their experiences, some that are a regular part of the College year and others that we have engaged with for the first time. Only last week a number of pupils took part in a two-day model UN conference working with pupils from schools across London and then this week we have had the finals of the Grammar Jack Petchey Speak Out competition. We had the fantastic production of the Addam's Family over three nights last week and our beautiful annual Service of Carols and Readings with the Ursuline High School this week. These are only scratching the surface of what makes Wimbledon College so special.

I would also like to thank you, as parents, for the support you give to the College and our staff who give so much to ensure that all of these activities are available to the pupils.

I hope and pray that all members of our school community have a safe, enjoyable and peaceful Christmas.

I would like to share this year's Christmas message from Archbishop John Wilson with you. Please see the following link. <https://youtu.be/aYz9WG1Qf2A?si=B23pY00Csg1HYXY1> In it he talks about the Church's coming Year of Prayer and encourages us all to take time to pray.

Y7-13 Grade cards

Grade cards will be sent out by the beginning of next week and will contain the following:

- A summary of the latest round of assessments carried out this half term
- Effort grades in each subject for standard of classwork, contribution to class and independent learning (homework)

Poetry and Rhetoric Target Reports will be sent out in time for Parents' Evening next term

When comparing your child'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. If you have any concerns about your child's target

grades, or about their progress in general, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Head of Line. Departments will be also using this data to make changes to setting, pupils affected by these changes will receive a new timetable in January.

Attendance

I would like to draw parents' attention to the letter that Mr Cargill sent out to all families this week. Please do take the time to read it. Attendance at school is an important part of them achieving their full potential.

Thank you for your Advent contributions

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported our Advent charitable activities. We have piled up the Dons Local Action van with an impressive amount of donations of food, delivered loads of really thoughtfully chosen gifts to the Salvation Army, sent off a package stuffed with greetings cards to the Jesuit Refugee Service to bring some cheer to refugees being kept in detention this Christmas, raised £1350 at our Joint Carol Service with the Ursuline High School for the Passage homeless charity, and raised over £2200 so far for Jesuit Missions from our non-uniform day, fundraising challenges and raffle. We have still had only about half of parents contributing for the non-uniform day, so hopefully this number will rise even further.

We are hugely grateful for all your generosity and support.

Careers/PSHE update

This half term we were able to enhance our PSHE programme by inviting in some very interesting and inspirational external speakers. Our Grammar students heard from Cairo who works for the St Giles' charity about the dangers of exploitation and county lines. This was a very emotive session and one in which boys showed a great deal of maturity whilst listening to. Our Rudiments boys were very fortunate to have the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and NHS visit two weeks ago, to deliver an insightful 'Safety First' day. To acknowledge Anti-bullying Week in November, Stand Against Violence came and delivered two assemblies to our Figures and Rudiments students and got them to consider the importance of not being a bystander should they witness bullying.

Thank you to all who have helped us give our students a very varied and interesting career talks programme this term. These include PWC and the presentation to Rhetoric students they delivered about the degree apprenticeship programme, alumni Andrew Harding discussing his online start up company and Belberdos Landscapes discussing a career in landscape design and gardening.

As you may have seen from Ms Parrish's email earlier this term, we are very excited to be hosting our Future Options & Careers Fair on Friday 8th March 2024. If you feel you may be able to give some of your time, or know someone who may be able to, please complete the Google Form via the link below and we will contact you with more details.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1l6cRM6NRM98ibwyLd1u1qNL9NC1OtsEaLyWUYEK-iL0/edit>

School Council

Following on from the School Council caucus which took place during PSHE a representative from each tutor group from across the school met on Friday 10th November for the School Council meeting. As a school an area that we are focussing on is reading and the focus of this meeting was 'Reading for Pleasure.' Working in their houses pupils produced a presentation which considered how frequently they read, what the benefits are of reading for pleasure, what the school can do to support them to read for pleasure more frequently and how reading for pleasure fits in with the qualities from the Jesuit Pupil Profile. These presentations were shared with the College's leadership team.

This half term as a school community we have also celebrated Polish Independence Day on 11th November and Human Rights Day on 10th December.

Drama

Our Christmas production of *The Addams Family* by Marshall Brickman, Rick Elice and Andrew Lippa was judged to be a roaring success, and we are very proud of all our students who worked so hard and made it a production to remember! There are many more drama projects to get involved in throughout the year. Next term will see Stage 1 Drama Club performing with King's College Community Production and Stage 2 Drama Club performing their play in Connections, the National Theatre annual nationwide youth theatre festival.

Model United Nations Conference

Fifteen pupils from the More Able cohorts of Lower Grammar, Grammar and Syntax took part in a Model United Nations conference at Mulberry School for Girls in mid-December. This two-day conference simulates the machinations and negotiations of a real UN meeting, and pupils were given countries as diverse as Chad, China and Canada to represent in their committees. The topic was a serious and a salient one: the scarcity of potable water in certain areas of the world, and what can be done to solve this problem. The organisers were delighted with the efforts and application of all our delegates, with prizes going to Paul Zogbessou (Lower Grammar - most improved delegate) and Charlie Wilson (Syntax - negotiating skills).

Jack Petchey Speak Out

The English Department was delighted once more to see some wonderful examples of public speaking in this year's Jack Petchey Speak Out competition. Workshops for 60 boys in Grammar early in the school year saw six boys progress to the Wimbledon College Assembly Final, where they had the daunting task of performing in front of the serried ranks of their entire year group. Finalists, Ozan Andersson, Neal Chumroo, Bruno Aslanian, Gui Aquino and Hunor Szantai performed with poise and aplomb, receiving excellent feedback from resident judges, Miss Walker, Miss Charlton and Mr Van der Hoeven. In the end, Hunor was runner-up with a well-structured speech on the power of nostalgia, while Neal

took first prize with a remarkably engaging performance, taking inspiration from his recent Model UN experience to speak powerfully about the issue of water shortages around the globe. These two will go on to represent the school in the Merton Regional Final next year.

House Music Competition

Our rescheduled annual House Music Competition will be held on Thursday 25th January at 7pm in the College Hall. Last year's winners were from Rudiments and Lower Grammar so we encourage entries from all year groups. Please email Mr Thomas if your son is interested. for.thomas@wimbledoncollege.org.uk

Instrumental Lessons

Some instrumental teachers still have space for pupils. Please email Mr Thomas if your son would like to learn a musical instrument. We especially encourage players of brass and woodwind instruments and have some instruments that boys can borrow initially.

PE Department

A General reminder to all pupils about having the correct kit for their Games lessons. All pupils must make sure they have the correct clothing for their Games lessons. You must wear the school Games shirt for the Games lessons, house T shirts are not acceptable. Please also make sure you have white shorts as again other colours are not allowed to be worn.

Rugby - from Mr Hallett

A huge thank you and congratulations to all the pupils who represented the College on a Saturday morning throughout the Autumn term. It is testament to your commitment that we are able to field so many teams and play against some of the very best schools in the South East region. In total we played 137 fixtures last term.

This does not happen by itself and I have a huge debt of gratitude to all the members of staff who gave up their time on Saturday's or after school for training. The number of fixtures played certainly would not have been possible without their support.

Nor would the amazing levels of hospitality, which still makes our home venue the envy of our opponents, be there for all to enjoy post-match. A huge thank you to all the parents who have also given up their time to help on a Saturday morning and helped to support the College's extra-curricular sport and especially the Rugby programme.

I can announce that this year's winner of #WCbakeOff23 was Mrs (Granny) Boardman for the amazing Victoria Sponge cake.

My final thank you is to all the parents in year 12 & 13 who recently hosted our Jesuit brothers from St Aloysius College, Sydney, Australia. At short notice you stepped up and once again showed the amazing and special community we have at Wimbledon College. The feedback has been amazing from their staff and pupils and I know that lifelong friendships and memories were created over the space of the weekend.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a wonderful and happy New Year.

Support with the purchasing of College uniform

I am aware that families may be finding it difficult to purchase items of school uniform at the current time due to financial reasons. We do have provision in place to support our families. I would ask, if you find yourself in a position where your child needs items of school uniform and you are unable to purchase them for financial reasons, that you contact your child's Head of Line in the first instance and we will do what we can to provide the appropriate support.

School Uniform expectations

Thank you to all parents who have ensured that your children are wearing the correct school uniform, not only in school but on their way to and from school.

There are however a number of boys who are wearing incorrect shoes and coats. I ask that you ensure your child[ren] as [are] wearing the correct uniform when they return to College in January. This includes formal black shoes and appropriate overcoats.

Please be aware that the expectation on coats are that they are plain black, with sleeves and without logos. Hoods are allowed but are not to be worn in school. I must also point out that coats are to be worn over blazers and not instead of them.

I would ask that you check the School Uniform List before buying any school uniform.

Expensive coats

We have been asked by the Police to inform all parents that there is, unfortunately, an increase in the number of cases where school pupils are being threatened to hand over expensive/designer coats.

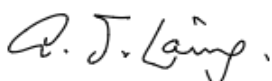
If pupils are wearing coats in line with the school uniform code this should not be an issue however I want to make you aware of this crime and for your children to be conscious of the increased risk if they are wearing expensive coats over the holiday period.

Return to school

A reminder that school reopens for all pupils on Monday 8 January 2024.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a safe, enjoyable and peaceful Christmas.

God bless,



Adrian Laing
Headteacher