

11th September 2009

To: All Parents

Beginning of academic year newsletter

I hope that you and your family enjoyed the summer break and that the new academic year has started well for your son.

This newsletter is being posted to parents, but other newsletters during the year will be sent home by 'boy post'. All newsletters are posted on our website (www.bgsboys.co.uk). **Included with this newsletter are sheets giving key dates – two sheets for Senior School parents (one for September-October and one for the academic year) and one sheet for Junior School parents (for the academic year). Please retain these sheets for reference.**

1. Examination results

We were delighted with the A Level results achieved by last year's U6th students. The pass rate was 99.5%, with 70% of entries being awarded A or B grades. 21% of the year group achieved at least 3 A grades. **David Howorth**, who was Vice Captain of School, achieved 5 A grades. Five boys (**Mark Ghobrial, Jonathan Glover, Azhar Khan, Alexander Lau** and **James Scholes**) each achieved 4 A grades, and six boys (**Bilal Ahmad, Tom Bower, Taylor Messenger, Alexander Salem, Matthew Travis** and **Adam Turner**) each achieved 3 A grades. James Scholes met his conditional offer to read Natural Sciences at Robinson College, Cambridge.

I congratulate the above boys for what they achieved. They worked hard to earn these excellent grades, and most of them did so alongside a commendable commitment to sport, music, drama and other parts of the school's rich extra-curricular programme. They are well equipped to meet and enjoy the challenges and opportunities of their university and future careers and they leave BGSB with our warmest best wishes.

At GCSE the percentage of entries graded A* to C was 93% and the percentage of entries graded A* or A was 48%. I particularly congratulate the following. **Imran Nisar** achieved an A* in all 10 of his subjects (including French, taken in 2008). The following boys achieved A* or A Grades in all of their subjects (including French, taken in 2008). (The number of A* Grades is given in brackets.) **Alex Adler** (6), **Jack Armstrong** (9), **Zain Bhatti** (7), **Stephen Fielden** (9), **Michael Gaunt** (7), **Max Hurst** (6), **Joshua Keown** (3), **Marcus Lancashire** (7), **Neville Mamoowala** (6), **Aditya Pahade** (9), **Jonathan Rigby** (3), **Jamie Schilfer** (3), **Joseph Schofield** (5) and **Elliott Wyse** (4).

2. Sports Tour to Australia and New Zealand

During the summer holiday 40 boys, forming a junior Football squad and a senior Rugby squad, went on tour to Australia and New Zealand. This week, three of the tourists gave a presentation about the tour in Assembly. The tour was clearly an immensely enjoyable, enriching and memorable experience for all who took part. I am very grateful to Mr Hilton for organizing and leading the tour, and to those parents who supported their sons' participation. Several parents joined the boys on tour and their presence was much appreciated – by both the boys and the staff. I hope that such a tour will become a regular feature of our extra-curricular programme.

3. Absence procedure

I should be grateful for your cooperation with our procedure relating to absence. If your son is absent from school, and we have not previously been notified of the absence, we ask that you 'phone the School Office (0161-797 2700) between 8.15am and 8.45am on the first morning of absence and ask for his Form Tutor to be informed. (A member of the School Office staff will 'phone the parents of a boy who is expected in school and who has not arrived by 9.30am.) When your son returns to school you are asked to provide his Form Tutor with a written note explaining the absence. This enables us to record the absence as an authorised absence. Thank you.

4. Homework

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Boys are made aware of the importance of homework and of the expectation that it be completed to the best possible standard. It is very helpful if parents encourage the boys in such good habits as doing their homework each evening (at least on Monday to Thursday each week) before engaging in other activities.

Boys in the First to Fifth Forms are expected to record their homework in their termly calendars each day. These calendars are inspected and signed by Form Tutors during the Form Period on Thursday mornings each week. **We should be very grateful if parents were to inspect their sons' calendars each week and, on Wednesday evenings (prior to the Thursday morning Form Period), sign the calendars in the space provided.**

The following time allocations should be regarded as guidelines:

1st Form	20-30 minutes per subject
2nd Form	25-35 minutes per subject
3rd Form	30-40 minutes per subject
4th Form	35-45 minutes per subject
5th Form	35-45 minutes per subject
L6th	4+ hours per AS subject per week
U6th	6+ hours per A2 subject per week

While writing about homework I should like to emphasize the importance of boys regarding 'homework set' as the minimum amount of work which should be done each

evening. Once boys start their GCSE courses in the Fourth Form, they should be doing two hours' homework each night (Monday to Thursday, with four hours being done at some stage during the weekend). Parents may be interested to know that I said the following to the boys in Assembly last week:

I have no doubt that the amount of time and effort you spend on your homework has an effect on the grades you achieve in your public examinations. A disciplined setting aside of time each evening – at least Monday to Thursday, with Friday's homework perhaps being done over the weekend – is important. 1st Formers – you should be spending between 1¼ and 1½ hours each night on homework; 2nd and 3rd Formers, between 1½ and 1¾ hours; and 4th and 5th Formers, and L6th and U6th, 2 hours. If you finish what has been set before that time has elapsed, use the remainder of the time for consolidation, revision or further reading.

5. Parental support at sports fixtures

Parents are warmly invited to attend sports fixtures – particularly those on Saturday mornings – and to come for refreshments in the Dining Hall afterwards. Such parental support is greatly appreciated by both boys and staff.

6. Website

Our current website has served us for three years. While we feel that it has done a good job in terms of being an 'online prospectus' for the parents of prospective pupils, it has not been as easy and flexible to use as we would wish in terms of providing current parents with the up to date information they would like to have. We have, therefore, commissioned the creation of a new website. We hope our new website will be functioning early in December. I should be grateful for parents' forbearance until the new site is launched.

7. Parental questionnaire

As part of our ongoing commitment to review and improve the education which the school offers, we have commissioned Kirkland Rowell, a company which specialises in school evaluation, to compile a parental questionnaire for us. The questionnaire will be distributed after the half-term break this term, and I should be grateful if parents were willing to complete and return the questionnaire to us.

8. Christopher Clarke Cancer Research Fund (cccrf)

Christopher was a boy at BGSB from 1999 to 2004. He died of a brain tumour in January 2006. Christopher's parents have set up a charity to raise funds to promote research into, and improvement in the treatment of, brain tumours. The school has held a non-uniform day to raise money for the charity and the enclosed flyer provides more information for parents who may wish to support its work.

9. Enclosures

- a) Key dates for September and October – Senior School only.
- b) Key dates for the academic year 2009-2010 – Senior School only.
- c) Junior School dates 2009-2010 – Junior School only.

- d) Flyer about the E-Safety meeting for parents on Monday 28th September.
- e) Christopher Clarke Cancer Research Fund flyer.
- f) Information from the Parents' Association about a Race Night and a family photographic portrait offer.