

10th September 2007

To : All Parents

Beginning of academic year newsletter

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

1. Examination results

At A Level our pass rate this year was 98.9%. **Raymond Ahmad, Michael Lillis, Stuart MacDonald, Rikesh Patel, Ashish Pradhan** and **Matthew Trafford** achieved A Grades in all their subjects and Matthew secured his place to read Law at Jesus College, Cambridge.

We were particularly pleased with this year's GCSE results. The pass rate at Grades A* to C was 97.2%, with 47.2% of the entries being awarded Grades A* or A. Every one of the 95 boys achieved at least 7 A* to C passes, and the following 15 boys achieved either A* or A in each of their 10 subjects: **Oliver Banks, Tom Bower, Mark Ghobrial, Jonathan Glover, Alexander Griffiths, Zayd Hashmi, David Howorth, Adil Iqbal, Azhar Khan, William Leach, Phillip Massey, Michael Page, Nicholas Swirad, David Taylor** and **Matthew Travis**. We were pleased to appear in the list of the 44 top independent boys' schools (at GCSE) in the country published in The Times on 1st September.

While there can never be any place for complacency about examination results, the above reflect very well indeed on the hard work of the boys and their teachers. We are primarily an academic community and helping the boys to fulfil their academic potential is at the heart of what we are about. We do, however, go beyond this. I was pleased to read a recent interview given by Tony Little, the Head Master of Eton. Mr Little, commenting on the A Level results achieved at Eton this year, said: 'My belief is that if you set up a good pastoral structure and you provide rich extra-curricular activities such as music, sport and theatre, then the academic results will follow. It pleases me that this year of boys who have done so well at A Level have also done well outside the classroom.' This holistic view of education is something which I fully endorse. I believe that here at BGSB we have both a very good pastoral structure and a rich extra-curricular programme. It is in such an environment that the boys can flourish and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that they do.

2. 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.

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 Friday mornings each week. It is very helpful if parents encourage the boys in such good habits as doing homework before engaging in other activities.

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
6th Form	4+ hours per AS subject per week
7th Form	6+ hours per A2 subject per week

A Homework Timetable, together with a Coursework Schedule for the parents of Fourth and Fifth Form boys, will be sent with the next mailing (late September/early October).

3. Sport

From this term we are expecting all boys who are representing the school on Saturdays to arrive for fixtures, both home and away, in full school uniform. They are also expected to arrive at the time stated by their coach, in order to prepare properly for their matches. After the matches boys will have the opportunity to shower and will then be expected to change back into school uniform and attend after-match refreshments in the Dining Hall. This offering of hospitality to our guests is a courtesy which we believe is important.

Parents are very welcome at sports fixtures – your presence and support are very much appreciated by both boys and staff. You are also most welcome to join us for refreshments after matches.

Below is an extract from our Community Code. We should be grateful for the support of boys and parents in this matter:

Representing the school at sport

- i) The extra-curricular programme at Bury Grammar School Boys is an integral part of the education which the school provides. We hope that you will regard being selected to represent the school at sport as an honour.
- ii) When you are selected for a team we expect you to be available for matches – unless you are playing at a higher, eg County, level. You will be chosen because you are deemed to have a talent which will contribute to the participation and enjoyment of a whole team – as well as, we hope, to your own enjoyment. Please regard yourself as having a responsibility to your fellow team members and to the school.
- iii) If, on a particular occasion, you are unable to play, your parents are asked to inform your team coach as early as possible, to give him maximum time to find a substitute. Please ask to be excused only for a very good reason.
- iv) We hope that you will enjoy representing the school, that the experiences will contribute to the enhancement of your skills and to your personal development, and that you will participate to the best of your ability.

4. Collection of ethnic background data

I enclose a DfES leaflet about ethnic monitoring and a green form which I ask you to complete and return to me in the envelope provided. I should be grateful to receive returns by the end of September. All schools are required by the DfES to provide this information, which will be used to compile statistics on the school careers and experiences of children from different backgrounds. The purpose of such statistics is to help ensure that all children have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. These statistics will not allow individual children to be identified publicly and the information will not be used for any other purpose. (In future this information will be asked for as part of our registration procedures. This has not been the case in the past, which is why I am having to ask you to complete and return the enclosed green form.)

5. 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.

6. Prizegiving

Following the success of last year's Prizegiving – which, for the first time, was for the whole school – Prizegiving this year will again take place in the **Victoria Hall in Bolton** (simply because there is no venue in Bury able to accommodate us all). This is the annual occasion when boys, parents, staff and Governors come together to celebrate the boys' achievements and successes. It will be held on **Wednesday 24th October**, beginning at 7.00pm and ending by 8.45pm. All boys are expected to attend and I very much hope that all parents will be with us as well. The Guest of Honour will be Mr Andrew Higginson. Mr Higginson is the Finance Director of Tesco plc and an Old Boy of the school; he is also the Chairman of Governors at the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe. Further details about the evening, including facilities for parking, will be sent with the next mailing. I should be grateful, however, if parents would make a note of this important date now. (For Senior School boys lessons will end at 12.20pm and the buses will leave at 12.45pm.)

7. Open Evening, Open Morning and Sixth Form Open Evening

Our annual Open Evening will take place on **Thursday 4th October** from 6.00pm to 8.30pm. We shall also be holding an Open Morning on **Saturday 6th October** from 10.00am to 1.00pm. These occasions are for parents who are considering BGSB for their sons. Both the Open Evening and the Open Morning will be publicised in various ways, but I should be very grateful if you were willing to encourage those known to you who are thinking about their sons' schooling to come and see what we have to offer. Parents, as well as the boys themselves, are very important ambassadors for us and we should greatly appreciate your help and support here. Thank you.

We are also holding a Sixth Form Open Evening (for our current Fifth Formers and their parents and for Fifth Formers in other schools who would like to know more about what the Sixth Form at BGSB offers) on **Tuesday 16th October** from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. As with the earlier Open Evening and Open Morning, we should be very grateful if you would draw this Sixth Form Open Evening to the attention of those you know who may be interested in it.

8. Parents' Meeting for parents of Seventh Form boys who are taught in the Girls' School

This meeting, at which parents are able to meet with subject teachers, takes place in the Girls' School on **Tuesday 18th September**, beginning at 7.00pm. Seventh Formers (who are also welcome to attend the meeting with their parents) should make appointments with their teacher(s) in the Girls' School.

9. Seventh Form Parents' Meeting

This will take place on **Thursday 11th October** from 5.00pm to 8.00pm. **Please note the earlier start time.** Seventh Formers are warmly invited to accompany their parents at this meeting.

10. Other important dates

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of this term's Calendar. I draw your particular attention to the following:

- a) **Friday 5th October.** The school will be closed on this day for a staff training day.
- b) **Monday 8th October.** The Parents' Association AGM. All parents are invited to this meeting, which is a good way to learn more about the important role of the Parents' Association and to contribute ideas you may have for its future activities.
- c) **Tuesday 9th October.** This is the day when the next whole-school photograph will be taken. This photograph is taken every two years – to ensure that boys who are with us only for the Sixth and Seventh Forms are able to be included. Boys are asked to give particular attention to their appearance on this day. **Sixth and Seventh Formers are required to wear plain white shirts.** Details of how to order a photograph will be available later in the term.
- d) **Tuesday 9th October.** This evening there is an opportunity for First Form parents to meet their sons' Form Tutors. Appointments will be made nearer the time and Mrs Taylor, the Head of First Year, will be in touch with parents about times.

I hope the new First Form boys enjoy their time at Plas Menai this week and that all the boys will have an enjoyable and successful term.