

12 December 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians

Head of PE Half Termly Report

I would like to say thank you to you all for supporting your boys over this last term in terms of PE, sport and our extra-curricular activities. I especially thank those who have helped in transporting boys, helped in the kitchen or simply supported us on the touch line; it all helps to make the experience of the boys that much richer.

The purpose of writing to you is twofold, one to explain our rationale behind subs particularly for those parents who haven't already made a donation to help pay towards the cost of the extra-curricular sport this term as well as that which will be coming up next term. Also to update you on what has been happening in school this term to give you a flavour of what we offer the boys, and finally our successes this year to date.

Firstly allow me to explain the rationale behind billing for extra-curricular sport, which incidentally only applies to boys who are selected to compete for the school. We recognise that we cannot guarantee that all boys will get the same game-time but because we need to book coaches, minibuses, first aid cover and match officials in advance we need sufficient funds to cover these costs. As a state school whose funding has fallen for the last four years, we go far beyond the statutory minimum for PE and sport but do so because our boys benefit from participating in energetic and demanding physical pursuits. However, we need to fund the additional costs on a 'club' basis. None of the subs go toward the PE staff who give up their free time, as well as the volunteers who help to make this happen.

You might wonder what has been happening this term and it is a rather exhaustive list. Firstly, within core PE this year we have had British Modern Pentathlon representatives in for a taster day of shooting and fencing, as well as Chris Pedder, a PGA golf pro from the High Post Golf Club for our Year 11 enrichment programme. These activities have run alongside the basketball, volleyball, badminton and obligatory fitness testing that has gone on this term, and for the first time men's lacrosse took place during Year 10 enrichment.

In terms of our competitive extra-curricular sports the cross country teams won both the minor and junior boys' events locally with the minor boys also progressing to the regional final of the ESAA cross country championships, where they came fourth overall. Due to the strong individual performances 17 boys have been selected for the Wiltshire trials in the new year.

Tennis saw the Year 7/8 team from last year knocked out of their cup by Bishop Luffa School, but the senior teams have excelled, with the B team coming second in their group, while the A team have won theirs and progress to the last 36 with a match against Beechen Cliff in the new year. The other age grade tournaments and Road to Wimbledon kick off in the summer term.

Badminton again has seen great popularity this term with Simon Woodhouse working with the boys who have their first round of the School Games on the last Wednesday of term. We expect to have at least four BWS teams entered.

In basketball the U18s beat Gillingham in a friendly preparing them for their first National Schools' game against St John's, Marlborough after Christmas. Year 9 won the local School Games tournament and progress to the county finals. The U16s were unable to have revenge over Wey Valley in their opener, but have a return fixture shortly and Year 8 will also have their first ever full game against St. John's, Marlborough before Christmas.

Football continues to thrive and grow, as we prepare for the local season with the lower and middle school. Year 11 have already played a regular season fixture against John Hanson in the cup, unfortunately losing. Meanwhile the 6<sup>th</sup> Form had an unrelenting rich vein of form with 14 games unbeaten in 12 months: they however just played in the 6<sup>th</sup> round of the National Cup, and lost to a very strong Bradfield College, they do however progress to the quarter final of the County cup in February and have two wins from two in their local league.

Rugby, as with senior football, has had great success so far this season. The 1<sup>st</sup> XV had a mixed season, eventually going out in the Natwest Cup to Hampton School, who inadvertently enjoyed our brand of rugby so much that they have asked for a block fixture next season. As well as this we will be a part of the Daily Mail Trophy and have a national ranking alongside the other top rugby playing schools.

Lower down the school the U12 boys have played some lovely rugby, only losing one game, while the U13s have developed from last year with both A and B teams representing at weekends. The U14s have had a strong season and rounded it off with a convincing 53-7 win against Canford in the county cup final. The U15s are having a strong run in the Natwest Vase competition with Beechen Cliff their next opponents in the 6<sup>th</sup> round. The U16s have gone from strength to strength and were unbeaten this side of half term, but unfortunately lost in their County Cup final to Canford.

As well as all of the above, the 6<sup>th</sup> form continue to run their own hockey club and have picked up a couple of fixtures after Christmas. We have also made links with Bath RFC and a number of boys are now a part of their Academy, also we have a visit booked for the New Year. Alongside this, old boy Angus Hogg paid us a visit with some invaluable input from Cardiff Blues. We have also been in discussion with Southampton Football Club to see if we can make better links with them, especially in the New Year, when our season kicks off in the lower years.

I must make special mention of our World Champion, Chris Marfell won gold in Daytona to be crowned the words best for his age group in Tumbling. Our old boys have also been busy with a number who all came through the sporting ranks here predominantly in football and rugby, and who completed both the Three Peaks Challenge and also 10 marathons in 10 days in aid of another old boy Jack Fishwick, who was seriously injured earlier this year. I highlight their support of another only to show how important the extra-curricular activities are to the boys in this school and the firm bonds it builds.

I am relishing the prospect of next term when basketball really gets going, along with the football, rugby 7s and lacrosse. Please if you can, do support us.

Kind regards and festive wishes

Richard Demain-Griffiths  
Head of PE